FIRST THINGS

August / September 2005 • Number 155

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POPE BENEDICT XVI

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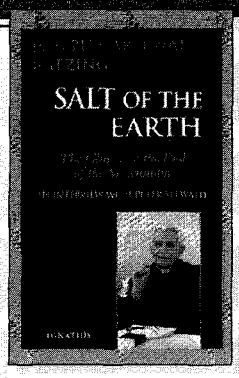

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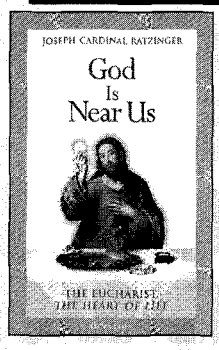

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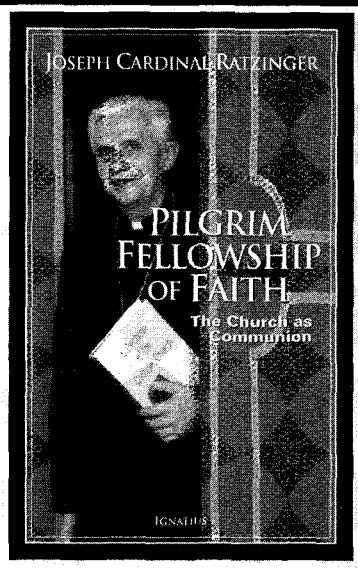

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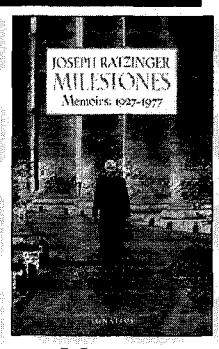

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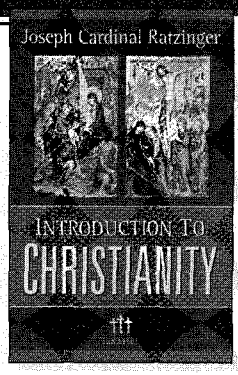

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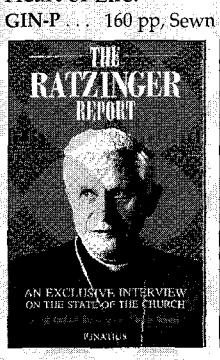

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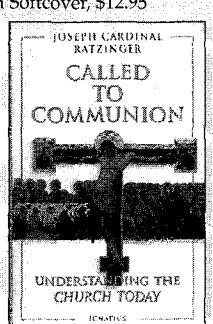

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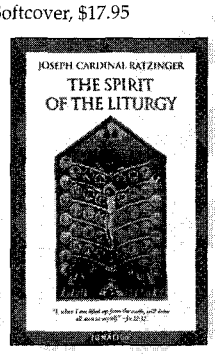

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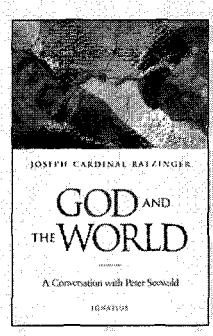

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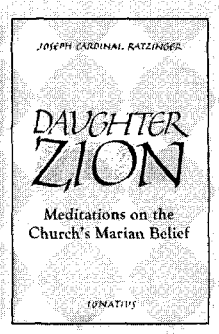

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More on War

Paul J. Griffith's analogy of the "just war" with the procedure for licensing drivers confuses agents and their actions (see "Who Wants War? An Exchange," April). Licensing implies that the state has a "presumption against drivers" (agents), not a "presumption against driving" (actions). Once a driver is licensed, the state has no presumption either for or against the act of driving as such. A particular act of driving must be judged on its individual merits: Driving your sick child to the hospital is good; driving home after a dozen beers at the Red Lion is bad.

Just war theory refers to both agents and actions. With respect to agents, it provides "licensing" requirements that determine whether an agent has the authority to prosecute war. This constitutes a presumption against agents, not a presumption against any particular act of war. With respect to actions, the theory gives criteria that must be met if war is to be conducted in a just manner. But just as requirements for prudent driving do not constitute a presumption against driving, neither do requirements for a just war constitute a presumption against war. We have a duty to drive our sick child to the hospital (a "presumption for driving," one might say) a well as a duty to drive safely. The Christian has a duty to pursue justice, and this may mean on occasion that a legitimate authority has a duty to pursue a just war. George Weigel is correct in sniffing out that the "presumption against war" is really a means of smuggling in pacifist assumptions, specifically the notion that no war is ever really just.

David Tye
Danvers, Massachusetts

I side with George Weigel in his exchange with Paul J. Griffiths, but I think most of Weigel's opponents fail to understand what he means when he denies that there is a "presumption against violence." These opponents think Weigel is denying the traditional criterion of last resort: If a cause is just, then authorities must not go to war immediately, but determine if there are other reasonable means for accomplishing the same goal. Perhaps it is the vague similarity of this criterion to a "presumption against violence" that has made it so easy for that concept to be smuggled into just war thinking.

The "presumption against violence" is a way of thinking about war based on the proportionalist method of ethical reasoning. As James Turner Johnson pointed out in "Just War, As It Was and Is" (FT, January), the concept originated with the Quaker James Childress's claim that war is a *prima facie* evil. In Catholic proportionalist terms, this means that while war is itself evil, it can be justified in some cases based on circumstances and consequences. As Johnson points out, this line of reasoning finds its way into the American bishops' *The Challenge of Peace*.

As Weigel has observed repeatedly, this way of thinking about war is foreign to the Catholic tradition, no doubt because proportionalist reasoning is foreign to that tradition. "War" in itself is not a specific enough act to be judged good or evil. It must be specified whether it is a just war or an unjust war. A just war is morally good, while an unjust war is evil—war itself is not a premoral evil that can be overridden by other considerations that make it good. This is a fundamental point of moral theology.

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In his critique of proportionalist modes of thinking, Germain Grisez points out that proportionalism has no place for what he calls existential goods—goods that are self-determining choices. Grisez gives the example of marriage: In proportionalist reasoning, the choice of commitment to each other is not a good in itself, but rather is a good only insofar as the spouses find value in it; otherwise, it becomes a "failed marriage."

Justice is among the existential goods listed by Grisez. This might explain the phenomenon that Weigel describes: the eclipse of the *ius ad bellum* criteria by the *ius in bello* criteria. From a proportionalist perspective, the legitimate reasons why a nation might go to war make no sense. Therefore the "presumption against violence" becomes a *de facto* pacifism. Just war analysis becomes simply listing the possible or actual destructive effects of a war, as if this were the last word.

Weigel and other defenders of the just war tradition must be clearer in what they are defending and what they are rejecting. Otherwise they will not overcome the muddled thinking that passes for just war analysis.

Matthew Shadle
Dayton, Ohio

In his exchange with George Weigel about just war theory, Paul J. Griffiths argues for the presumption against war by noting that every conditional *ius* to do a thing restricts the agent in that it presumes that, except in certain circumstances, the agent is not to do that thing. This is of course true, but if this is all the presumption against war means, it is nothing remarkable. As Griffiths argues for it, the presumption against war means simply that competent authority has the *ius ad bellum* only under certain conditions and not otherwise. Indeed. But no just war theorist ever doubted that.

The partisans of this debate are nevertheless convinced that they disagree, though it is not clear to me just where. In the recent exchange, Griffiths did not succeed in arguing anything with which George Weigel or James Turner Johnson need disagree.

Perhaps those like Weigel have the following in mind: Justice ordains that, under certain circumstances, competent authority should make war and, under other circumstances, should not. Perhaps those like Griffiths believe justice ordains that under certain circumstances competent authority may make war and under other circumstances may not. The negatives "may not" and "should not" come to the same thing morally. But the affirmatives, "may" and "should," work very differently. It is in the "may" that a negative "presumption" may be located. If justice says to the agent, "You *may* under certain conditions make war," the permissive mode means either that when those conditions are satisfied the agent's actual choice then occurs in a morally indeterminate freedom—which no Augustinian can suppose—or that even when the initial conditions are satisfied the agent has further moral thinking to do. The restraint thereby imposed is the "presumption."

It would seem that the "may/may not" version is open to a rather severe logical objection. Besides an initial restriction, "under certain circumstances you may not make war," there is a second one, "and in other circumstances where you may, you should consider." An infinite regress opens, usually regarded as a bad sign. It may also be noted that the regress will prevent competent authority from ever coming to an actual decision to make war—or is that the real presumption?

I am not the expert that Johnson and others are. But pending contrary evidence from documents unknown to me, I will further venture that the should/should-not set of mandates is the historic just war doctrine.

Robert W. Jenson
Princeton, New Jersey

Paul J. Griffiths replies:
My thanks to those who responded to this discussion. I was trying only to make a modest logical point, which is well summarized (and endorsed) by Robert Jenson. I agree with him that the point is nothing remarkable. Truths are often like that, but are nevertheless worth restating from time to time, especially when others speak loudly in ways that appear to deny them.

David Tye's claim that I confuse agents and actions is itself confused. If a certain action can only properly be performed by a particular agent, then constraints upon the agent must also and necessarily be constraints upon the action.

To Matthew Shadle, who raises an important point, I can say only that if "war" means "lethal violence by a state against citizens of other states," then it is of course a *prima facie* evil, a *privatio boni*. To deny this status to war, so construed, is to descend into sub-Christian thought. Both *bellum* and *mors* are results of the fall. Does Shadle really think otherwise? The mention of proportionalism is a red herring. Everything here hinges upon how an action is described, and I commend to him consideration of the distinction between formal and material construals of morally significant actions.

The most interesting point in these letters is Jenson's distinction between "may" and "should." My initial inclination, unlike his, is to say that when the *ius ad bellum* conditions are met, the proper conclusion is that a state may (not should) go to war. This doesn't, I think, entail an infinite regress. The facts relevant to determining whether the "may" becomes a "should" are always local and thus in principle not susceptible

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to formal schematization. Perhaps it's like this: If certain conditions are met, I may marry some particular woman. But it doesn't follow from the fact that they're met that I should marry her. So, *mutatis mutandis*, for the *ius ad bellum*. Jenson's point, however, bears more thought.

Interesting though this debate is, I'd like to commend to all parties (me included) serious thought about the semantics and syntax of *pax* within the Christian account of things. *Pax* is neither only nor principally the absence of *bellum*, and discussion of *pax* should frame, order, and control talk about *bellum*. If this fundamental fact were taken more seriously than bellicose Christians typically do, just war talk would be transformed in the right direction.

George Weigel replies:
I hope this exchange and the correspondence it provoked has clarified some aspects of the debate over the so-called "presumption against war"—a debate which, if I may be frank, I find increasingly tiresome, if necessary. To make my own position clear, one last time, permit me to make four points, none of which can be developed or defended here:

1. Every serious Christian prefers that there not be war rather than that there be war, if means other than war are available and efficacious in resolving a conflict or defending justice, order, and freedom. This is, I hope, a "presumption against war" with which we all can agree.

2. It is, however, emphatically not what the presumption-against-war school teaches, which is that thinking about the possibly justifiable use of armed force begins with a *prima facie* duty of beneficence that must be overridden. I claim, and I stand with James Turner Johnson on this, that just war thinking begins somewhere else. It begins with a broader moral conception of politics: a theory of peace, a theory of governance, a theory of political action. It begins, in other words, with duly-constituted public authority's moral responsibility to defend those for whom it asserts responsibility. This starting point links the possibility of proportionate and discriminate armed force to worthy political ends (the peace of order, justice, security, and freedom)—a linkage the presumption-against school tends to weaken.

3. The case for this understanding of where just war thinking really begins can be demonstrated historically (this is where it always began, prior to James Childress) and theologically (this is where it must begin, within its own theo-logic).

4. The presumption-against school's success in selling this mistaken notion has tended to reinforce functional pacifism in the Catholic Church and in liberal Protestant communions, thus rendering them less-than-helpful participants in the public debate, especially in the new circumstances posed by the war against terrorism.

Bush and the Cause of Life

I found Hadley Arkes' recent essay interesting and informative (see "Bush's Second Chance," April). But while I oppose homosexual "marriage," I am also opposed to amending the American Constitution for the purpose of defining marriage. I disagree with Arkes' assessment of President Bush as "a good, sympathetic man." If that were true, he would not be reluctant to make the pro-life argument in public or bring about real change. His may be "the most pro-life administration that has ever been assembled," but that isn't saying much.

I hope that if Bush continues to refuse to make the pro-life argument in public or bring about real change, as I suspect he will, Arkes and FIRST THINGS will support the Constitution Party's candidates in 2008. We are not reluctant to make the pro-life case, and we agree that pro-life initiatives need not emanate from Congress.

Joe Eldred
Central Valley, New York

I'm surprised that Hadley Arkes is surprised that President Bush has been unwilling to expend political capital on behalf of the pro-life cause. In Texas, he preferred to govern by compromise and coalition-building. In Washington, we have seen this in his letting Senator Edward Kennedy write an education bill and in his acquiescing in Senator John McCain's campaign finance reform legislation, to name but two breaks with conservative principles. In last year's primary in Pennsylvania, Bush and the party establishment supported pro-abortion incumbent Senator Arlen Specter over pro-life Representative Patrick Toomey. Specter now chairs the judiciary committee.

If the Democrats' cultural enthusiasms make them the "Evil Party," the Republicans are the "Stupid Party." Their leaders seem to lack the brains, the courage, and the convictions to make an effective change. If Democrats are the enemy in the culture wars, Republicans are often false friends. The choice for pro-lifers seems to be between losing in slow-motion under the "Stupid Party" or losing in fast-forward under the "Evil Party." Both may occur.

The "Stupid Party" might find a way to lose Congress *and* the presidency by 2008, perhaps by losing the peace in Iraq. President Hillary Clinton could then pack the federal courts with liberals. After the next fanatic murders of abortionists, she might find a way to use the Patriot Act to have the more ardent pro-lifers shipped to Guantanamo Bay as terrorists. Thus, to paraphrase Orwell, the future might be a Birkenstock stomping on an aborted fetus—forever?

Evan M. Duncan
Alexandria, Virginia

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Weber's Iron Cage

In "Max Weber Goes Global" (April), Michael Novak argues that Max Weber's iron cage of capitalism can be avoided by a properly Catholic "delight in the goodness of creation." Although this analysis is at times compelling, the article overestimates capitalism's ability to cultivate full human flourishing.

Novak correctly restates Weber's thesis in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* that the "psychological tensions" of Calvinism allowed the northern European nations to succeed economically by instilling in the population a perceived "duty to increase their store and better their condition." Although this thesis has been maligned for misunderstanding the nature of Protestant Reformation theology, Novak argues that Weber is largely correct in identifying a connection between economic success and the religious and moral qualities of economic agents.

Weber saw in capitalism the potential to enslave, to trap its practitioners in an iron cage of endless asceticism and laborious struggle. For Novak this is not a problem of capitalism itself, but merely an artifact of its religious support system. It was the Protestant Reformation's propensity for "inner loneliness," born of an absolutely sovereign God, that led to a capitalism of duty, scarcity, and self-denial. A better understanding of the Catholic contribution to capitalism would do away with the iron cage, because Catholics "delight in the goodness of creation," Novak concludes.

The problem with Novak's assessment is his uncritical acceptance of the thin conception of human fulfillment that underwrites capitalism. Capitalism posits no moral end for the person. It holds no conception of the good life other than a life spent acquiring things and taking delight in them. But the Catholic tradition holds that human perfection lies in loving God, and the means to this goal include freedom from concupiscence and the death of the will. The love of God, the source and sustainer of all things, is the only love that never fails to fulfill us. Capitalism, particularly American-style consumerism, tends to obscure this Christian truth.

Kevin P. Lee
Ave Maria School of Law
Ann Arbor, Michigan

Michael Novak replies:
While I cannot agree with every part of Kevin P. Lee's summation of my argument, he is quite right on his main point—that capitalism posits no moral end for the human person. (To be sure, this is also an advantage; it is a system open to many persons who have quite contrary conceptions of the best life for the human person.)

That is why my own conception of a sound social system calls for more than capitalism—in fact for three systems in one: not only an economic system anchored around the ownership of practical insights reached through invention and discovery, but also a political system that protects the rule of law as well as individual and minority rights, and that separates political, legislative, and judicial powers; and also a strong cultural system based on the full flourishing of persons and communities, and rooted in the depths of the human spirit. Capitalism alone could not suffice for a full human vision, nor even for its own integrity and longevity.

In my view, the one fullest vision of human fulfillment, both for individuals and for the whole human community, is the Christian (Catholic) faith. That faith provides the fullest theory of political and personal liberty that I have ever encountered, and also—and this is a newer discovery—the best theory of the free economy. But two thirds of humanity are not currently Christians. So the open-endedness of capitalism, its limitation in one respect, is in other respects a strength to be grateful for.

Indeed, whatever the limitations of capitalism, which are many and real, its strengths should not go underappreciated. Capitalism is the best hope of the poor of the world to be liberated from immemorial poverty. It is, on the material side, the best supplier of support for a rich and complex civil society. And, empirically at least, it appears to be a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for the successful rooting of democracy. These are not minor social virtues.

The specific complaint Lee lodges against capitalism—that it tends to obscure Christian truth about the love of God, and to implicate us in too many worldly and pleasurable distractions—was lodged just as effectively against mercantilism, feudalism, and every other form of economy in history.

Nonetheless, in a society as free and as rich in human possibilities as the United States and Europe, I don't think that at the Final Judgment we will be able to plead as a mitigating circumstance that "capitalism made us do it."

We are, as history goes, remarkably free and remarkably endowed with the means to show our love for God in ways as numerous as the stars of the sky. If we do not do so, the fault lies not in our systems but in ourselves.

Zionism and the Covenant

As a Jew who has converted to Catholicism and traveled extensively in the Middle East, I read Gary A. Anderson's "How to Think About Zionism" (April) with great interest but was left troubled by what was not mentioned in it.

I believe that whatever plans and promises God has for the Jewish people and the Land of Israel are

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matters that He will fulfill in his own way and time. Nobody has the right to engage in unjust conduct to force God's hand. Yet while Anderson is astonished at the dearth of theological consideration regarding the founding of modern Israel, I was astonished at his lack of moral reasoning on the subject.

Nowhere does Anderson explain what right a European colonial power and international organizations had to assign an Arab territory to the control of European Jews. Nowhere does he explain how the territory's ethnic minority had a right to assert claims of sovereign control against the wishes and sentiments of others in the territory who constituted a decisive majority. Nowhere does he defend the Zionist movement's trafficking in ideas of population transfer in the late 1930s while it was preparing to accept a partition proposal that it had no intention of obeying. And nowhere does he demonstrate what right the Zionists had to uproot and dispossess a half million innocent noncombatants and wipe scores of villages off the map.

If Anderson believes such conduct is acceptable in light of his theology, then he should make that case as part of his theological evaluation of Zionism. If he does not, then I would suggest that it is a questionable exercise to indulge in interpretive Christian eschatology on the subject.

Robert Barnett
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Gary Anderson's conclusion that the Old Testament affirms the right of return to Zion as part of God's providential design, warranting Christian support of Zionism on theological grounds, conflicts with the fundamental natural law precept of the right to liberty. According to General John Bagot Glubb's *Peace in the Holy Land*, at the time the League of Nations adopted the Palestine Mandate in 1922, 93 percent of Palestinians were Arabs. When Palestine was partitioned in 1947, two-thirds of the population was Arab. Six percent of the land of Palestine belonged to Jews, but the partition plan gave fifty-four percent of the land to the new State of Israel. No plebiscite was ever held, and native Palestinians were not represented in the 1947 United Nations debate on partition.

I have no answers to the enduring Palestine and Israel problem, but the cause of peace in the Middle East and Muslim-Christian amity is not served by putting a theological gloss on an act of nineteenth-century-style colonialism. If the natural law foundations enshrined in our Declaration of Independence are indeed universal, the injustice done to the Palestinian Arabs should at least be acknowledged by leaders of the Christian West.

Charles T. Duvall
Gaithersburg, Maryland

In printing Gary Anderson's "How to Think About Zionism," FIRST THINGS consulted an Old Testament scholar about twentieth-century history. Oddly entertaining. Anderson says that Zionism has a (uniquely) theological significance. Zionism presents a theological challenge to the Jews (at least the minority of religious ones), to Christians (even though only a minority of them perceive it), to Muslims—to all mankind, in fact, for it "is miraculous" that Israel "has lasted two millennia without a homeland or any sort of native rule." Thirty thousand years of Native American history may be ignored.

Anderson's interpretation of biblical and modern history is simplistic and his understanding of Catholic theology is sadly lacking. No one can determine from the Hebrew Bible what were the territorial dimensions of the land that the biblical authors claimed God promised them. Anderson reads with innocent literalism what is arguably mythological rhetoric meant to justify facts on the ground by appealing to Providence.

Anderson relies upon only one of the Old Testament's theologies, the Deuteronomic, according to which losers deserve to lose and winners demonstrate God's favor here and now, since there is no transcendent life beyond the grave. Health, wealth, and victory reveal God's blessing and man's righteousness. But that sort of thinking was demolished by Job and turned upside down by Jesus.

In Romans 9, Paul lists the special promises and gifts God gave the Jews. There is no mention of land. The New Testament shows no interest in land at all, even though nearly all early Christians were Jewish. Jesus never sounded like Joshua, who ordered genocide as necessary to the fulfillment of God's promise. Jesus never sounded like Anderson, either.

The Catholic Church has never acknowledged that modern Israel is an "eschatological event" or even a "true *opus Dei*, or 'work of God.'" It has never taught that any historical event (outside ancient biblical Palestine) is an implication contained in God's final revelation in Jesus. Granted, both Sts. Augustine and Thomas accepted that the scattering of the Jews was a punishment for Jewish sins, but when the Second Vatican Council repudiated that theory in *Nostra Aetate*, it also excluded giving the obverse meaning to a "return to Zion."

Karl Rahner thought tribalism had distorted much of Old Testament theology. Jean Danielou, paying heed to Herbert Butterfield, said it best: "Any system . . . which attempts to justify the ways of God to men by the criteria of man's righteousness is a monstrous absurdity, and obviously doomed to utter failure. Albert Camus was perfectly right, on his own assumptions, to bring in a verdict of guilty when try-

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ing the case of God by the principles of purely human justice."

The same sub-Christian Deuteronomic theology found in all three Abrahamic faiths influenced the Holocaust and has birthed and nourished modern Israel (and both its friends and enemies). It is very sad. What on earth is God doing in Palestine? Begging mankind to buy a cross.

Richard J. Rolwing
Columbus, Ohio

Gary A. Anderson replies:
Robert Barnett must have read my article in a hurry; he missed over half of the argument. I thought I made it perfectly clear that Israel's conduct in the land is a matter of some significance. One wonders, however, why Barnett does not excoriate Israel's neighbors for even worse acts of barbarism against Israel and their own native populations. If Barnett were fair-minded he would be similarly—if not more—outraged by this behavior. For had the Arab nations simply accepted the borders of 1948 they would have had everything they are now demanding and more.

Charles T. Duvall anachronistically presumes that there was a large settled and self-identified population that thought of itself as Palestinian and was forced out of the land of Israel by dint of waves of Jewish immigration blessed by colonial European interests. Yet Jews began returning to Palestine under Turkish rule, an era in which the *land* of Palestine was not densely populated. The dramatic rise in population of both the Arab and Jewish communities in the twentieth century was no doubt nurtured by the sacrifices of many Zionists who made this land fit for modern agriculture. And the rise of a specifically Palestinian identity—no where in evidence in the Ottoman empire—takes place in no small measure because of the impact of Zionism. This point about historical origins does not imply that one is free to ignore that Palestinian identity. Moral obligations must always be calibrated to the events of the present day. Rather, my claim is that the demographic picture of Palestine at the turn of the twentieth century was far more complicated than Duvall would have it.

Richard J. Rolwing's letter is the most disturbing. What does one say to a man who believes that a central book of the Old Testament—Deuteronomy—is sub-Christian? Marcion's shadow is never far from a discussion of the Jews. As to Paul and the fact that he does not mention the land in Romans 9, the answer is simple. Paul lived before the devastation of the Second Temple in A.D. 70. The right of the Jews to their land was an inarguable commonplace in his own day.

In regard to his reference to Native Americans, I suggest the following thought experiment: Had the European colonizers of this continent forcibly expelled these tribesmen across the face of Europe would they, several hundred years later, have retained sufficient cultural and religious identity that they would desire to return *en masse* to their motherland? My own family of Swedish descent, just three generations after its immigration to Minnesota, has lost every vestige of its original cultural moorings. Only diligent genealogical sleuthing can preserve a glimmer of those distant memories. Augustine had it right: The perdurance of the Jews as Jews in spite of their being cast across the globe is nothing short of miraculous.

Morally Healthy Cells

William Hurlbut's proposal to produce biologically and morally healthy embryonic stem cells by a procedure he calls "altered nuclear transfer" (ANT) is highly questionable (While We're At It, March).

Biologically, it seems unlikely that one could produce healthy human cells from a growth precisely programmed not to be a human embryo. If the initial biological material is altered to make it impossible to become human, which is the humanizing life-principle in a human conception, what guarantee is there that we have a stable and healthy human growth from which the cells would be derived? If the proposal is not to alter the biological material to the point that we have to question the healthy humanness of the cells, who is to guarantee that the source material is not at least a deformed human embryo or even perhaps a perfectly healthy human embryo whose ability to implant has been destroyed?

The key reality is human conception. If we have done something to the elements involved in the ANT procedure to guarantee that there is no human conception, then there is no guarantee or even likelihood that the cells derived from the growth will be of any value. If we do something less that makes it possible or likely that a human conception would occur (that a human embryo with its spiritual life principle would come into existence), we have cloned a human embryo, which is absolutely prohibited morally.

The Rev. Lawrence A. Kutz
Washington, DC

William Hurlbut of the President's Council on Bioethics is to be commended for his untiring efforts supporting scientific progress through ethical stem-cell research. While recognizing the need to preserve the inherent dignity of human embryonic life from the moment of conception, he has worked proactively to find alternative sources of pluripotent stem cells. We certainly hope that his concept of "altered nuclear transfer" (ANT) will one day provide a source of fully versatile stem cells without the need for embryo-destructive techniques.

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We must be careful, however, that we do not defend his proposal with faulty conclusions. Richard John Neuhaus writes, "In 'altered nuclear transfer' what is created never could and never would become a baby and, it therefore follows, is never a human being at any point." Since when is birth the qualification for entry into the human family? If human life begins at conception, we must ask ourselves whether in ANT a human embryo is ever produced. Does the process of ANT create biological entities that are simply "embryo-like" and devoid of moral import, as Hurlbut suggests, or would it rather create human embryos with partially defective genomes resulting in the untimely deaths of early human beings? Let the scientific and ethical debate continue and the animal studies begin.

Don W. Buckley
Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission
Southern Baptist Convention
Pensacola, Florida

Intelligent Design?

Richard John Neuhaus' discussion of the teaching of evolution in schools (April) argues that evolution is really just a theory, and there are other theories (intelligent design) with an equal claim to being taught in schools.

On the first point, it is a commonplace among philosophers of science that the fact-theory relation is far too complex to allow a clean cutting apart and labeling of the two. Of course, sometimes one needs to draw a sharp line in a gray area, but it is noticeable that the current pressure on the teaching of evolution is not motivated by such an honest concern for even an approximate distinction between theory and fact. Huge swathes of human knowledge, including most of science and much of history, are "theory" in the sense in which the relevant pressure groups (and Neuhaus, it seems) take the word. Yet no one is urging school boards to attempt a consistent demarcation across the whole curriculum. To single out evolution for such demarcation will mislead the students about its status.

On the second point, the overwhelming majority of scientists oppose the teaching of intelligent design because it is not even a theory, just an infinitely malleable template for stories. To make it science, its proponents must come up with an empirical way to distinguish intelligent design from Darwinian natural selection. I accept Neuhaus's point that it is wrong to criticize intelligent design proponents for their religious beliefs, but it is clear that something other than scientific zeal is driving their efforts.

Finally, I respect Neuhaus's basic concern that evolution should not be represented, in schools or elsewhere, as a refutation of the existence of God. It all comes down to what is said about the mutations that provided the genetic variation underlying the observed evolution of life on earth. Simplifying to one sentence: We have no evidence, one way or the other, about the randomness or purposelessness of those mutations, and it is reasonable to ask teachers not to claim that we do.

Mark Alford
Physics Department
Washington University
St. Louis, Missouri

RJN replies:
Other readers have also suggested that I oversimplified the distinction between theory and fact. They are right. As to whether intelligent design is, in fact, a theory, I leave to its proponents such as Michael Behe and William Dembske, both of whom have written in these pages. Alford's last sentence gets to the main point I was making. The theory of evolution presented as philosophical materialism or determinism or practical atheism, call it what you will, should not be permitted a monopoly in the classroom. The controversy surrounding intelligent design is challenging that monopoly and that is, all in all, a good thing.

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Opinion

Against Eternal Youth

Frederica Mathewes-Green

I'm a fan of old movies, the black-and-whites from the 1930s and 1940s, in part because of what they reveal about how American culture has changed. The adults in these films carry themselves differently. They don't walk and speak the way we do. It's often hard to figure out how old the characters are supposed to be—as though they were portraying a phase of the human life-cycle that we don't have any more.

Take the 1934 film *Imitation of Life*. Here Claudette Colbert portrays a young widow who builds a successful business. (Selling pancakes, actually. Well, it's more believable if you see the whole movie.) She's poised and elegant, with the lustrous voice and magnificent cheekbones that made her a star. But how old is she supposed to be? In terms of the story, she can't be much more than thirty, but she moves like a queen. Today even people much older don't have that kind of presence—and Colbert was thirty-one when the movie came out.

How about Clark Gable and Jean Harlow, smoldering away in *Red Dust*? They projected the kind of sexiness that used to be called "knowing," a quality that suggested experienced confidence. When the film came out Gable was thirty-one and Harlow ten years younger. Or picture the leads of *The Philadelphia Story*. When it was released in 1940, Katharine Hepburn was thirty-three, Cary Grant thirty-six, and Jimmy Stewart thirty-two. Yet don't they all look more grownup than actors do nowadays?

Characters in these older movies appear to be an age nobody ever gets to be today. This isn't an observation about the actors themselves (who may have behaved in very juvenile ways privately); rather, it is about the way audiences expected grownups to act. A certain manner demonstrated adulthood, and it was different from the manner of children, or even of adolescents such as Judy Garland and Mickey Rooney.

Today actors preserve an unformed, hesitant, childish quality well into middle age. Compare the poised and debonair Cary Grant with Hugh Grant, who portrayed a boyish, floppy-haired ditherer till he was forty. Compare Bette Davis' strong and smoky voice with Renée Zellweger's nervous twitter. Zellweger is adorable, but she's thirty-five. When will she grow up?

In a review in the *Village Voice* of the film *The Aviator*, Michael Atkinson dubbed our current crop of childish male actors "toddler-men." "The conscious contrast between baby-faced, teen-voiced toddler-men movie actors and the golden age's grownups is unavoidable," he wrote. "Though DiCaprio is the same age here as Hughes was in 1934, he may not be convincing as a thirty-year-old until he's fifty." Nobody has that old-style confident authority any more. We've forgotten how to act like grownups.

Maybe "forgotten" isn't the right word, for the Baby Boomers fought adulthood every step of the way. About the time we should have been taking on grownup responsibilities we made a fetish of resisting the Establishment. We turned blue jeans and t-shirts into the generational uniform. We stopped remembering the names of world political leaders and started remembering the names of movie stars' ex-boyfriends. We stopped participating in fraternal service organizations and started playing video games. We Boomers identified so strongly with being "the younger generation" that now, paunchy and gray, we're bewildered. We have no idea how to be the older generation. We'll just have to go on being a cranky, creaky appendix to the younger one.

Picture the World War II generation, returning home after seeing too much agony and bloodshed. The world had felt like a dangerous place for a long time. Their own parents had vivid memories of World War I, and their childhood years had included the starvation and misery of the Great Depression. And now here they were after the war, newly married and living in the new, quiet suburbs. As they looked at their tiny newborn babies, these brave young survivors felt a powerful surge of protection. They wanted their little ones never to experience the things they had, never to see such awful sights. Above all, they wanted to protect their children's innocence.

In the days when large families lived together in very small houses, when paralyzed or senile family members were cared for at home, when families bred and slaughtered their own livestock, even the youngest child knew a lot about the facts of life. Until very recently, it was not possible to protect children from knowing such things. Nor was it thought desirable: Life was hard and dangerous, and the sooner you learned how to handle things, the better. But in the 1950s and 1960s there was a stretch of time in which parents could keep their children separated from the hard adult world until they were well into their teens.

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That separation ended with the advent of cable television and the Internet. Now parents have to learn all over again how to deal with a world in which children can get at all the information adults can. The silver lining is that the generation gap has disappeared; today's teens and twenty-somethings watch the same movies and listen to the same music their parents do. Less silvery is the fact that so much of this material is coarse and obscene, and even children's entertainment is littered with potty jokes.

There doesn't seem to be a way to stop this, but if it's any comfort to you, it was probably the same in the time of Chaucer. Once again, as through most of human history, we're not able to protect children's "innocence" about the facts of adult life. We'll have to figure out how to equip children to deal with these facts, as previous generations did. That will require parents to be more directive, more authoritative and "parental," than Boomers have ever felt comfortable being.

The well-meaning parents of the 1950s confused vulnerability with moral innocence. They failed to understand that children who were always encouraged to be childish would jump at the chance and turn childishness into a lifelong project. These parents were unprepared to respond when their children acquired the bodies of young adults and behaved with selfishness, defiance, and hedonism.

The World War II generation envisioned a sharp contrast between childhood and adulthood: Childhood was all gaiety, while adulthood was burdened with misery and toil. The resulting impulse was to place children in a hermetically sealed playroom. Childhood, once understood as a transitional stage, was now almost a physical place—a toy-filled nursery where children could linger all the golden afternoon. Parents looked on wistfully, wishing their dear children could stay young forever.

As they say: Be careful what you wish for. When conservatives get nostalgic for the Ozzie-and-Harriett parenting of the 1950s, they should remember how the experiment turned out. The children got older, but they never grew up. They continued to show the same self-centered and demanding behavior that had fit so well with their parents' desire to pamper and protect. They continued to expect that life would be arranged to please them, as it had been in the playroom. They ridiculed their parents' values, slept around, and trashed all forms of authority.

Of course, when all the authorities have been trashed, the world doesn't feel very secure. Anxiety hangs over a culture when adults act like children. The Baby Boomers rejected not just grownup life but grownups. They rejected the parents who had worried so much over them. If something looked like what grownups would do, Boomers wanted no part of it.

The most serious loss here is the project of education as it has been understood through most of human history. In earlier cultures, a child was at his parents' side throughout the day, learning how to do things that were not just make-work chores but important contributions to the needs of the household. Childhood was going to be over very quickly.

By the time a child was twelve or thirteen, he would be thought capable of making binding life-long spiritual commitments—this was the traditional age for sacramental confirmation or Bar Mitzvah. By the time his body was fully formed, he would be expected to do a full day's work. He could expect to enter the ranks of full-fledged grownups soon after and marry in his late teens. Childhood was a swift passageway to adulthood, and adulthood was a much-desired state of authority and respect.

The Boomers preserved their parents' nightmare vision of adulthood as horrid and constricting. They communicated to their own children an urgent admonition to avoid this fate: "Be free," they said. "Follow your dreams." Be creative. Children were encouraged to see themselves primarily as creative artists, drawing on their rich inner resources to produce beautiful, if not entirely practical, works. The stories they heard reinforced the idea that the person to admire is the one who endures challenge and struggle in order to obey the muse.

Think for a moment of that 1946 Christmastime favorite, *It's a Wonderful Life*. The message here is the exact opposite. George Bailey has dreams of being an explorer and traveling the world, but he keeps nobly setting these aside in order to care for his family. Nobody would make this movie today. In today's version, George Bailey would have a screaming fight with his father, storm out of the house, hop on a steamer, circle the world, have dangerous and exciting adventures, and return home to a big celebration. His dad would then tell him, with tears in his eyes, "You were right all along, son."

That kind of triumph doesn't happen very often. If anything, despite their exhortations to risk all for your dreams, Boomers have raised their children to be cautious and risk-averse. Gen-Xers spend their first few decades, through graduate school, being closely observed by kind people who helpfully affirm or critique their every effort. They reciprocate with fondness and affection. Rather than rebelling, they often seem to wish they could be closer to their parents. A *Time* magazine article in January 2005 revealed that 48 percent of

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twenty-somethings phone or email their parents every day. They may feel insecurity about their place in the lives of those self-absorbed, carefully non-directive Boomers.

These years of extended schooling constitute a sweet life, but it changes abruptly when the graduate hits the sidewalk. Suddenly the child who has been raised on endless flexibility is faced with having to get to work on time, dress as expected, take breaks only at appointed times, and get up the next day to do it all over again. Life after school turns out to have a lot of inflexible rules, and children who've been raised on unlimited flexibility hit it like a brick wall.

In their 2001 book *The Quarterlife Crisis*, Alexandra Robbins and Abby Wilner describe how confounding this surprise is. They cite one young woman who wrapped up her academic career with a Master's in flute performance and then discovered that it wasn't a very employable skill. You can imagine how many professors and advisors over the years listened to her with shining eyes, and repeatedly told her she could do anything she wanted. It's not her fault that she believed them. Boomers have been preparing their children for a life that doesn't exist.

The Boomers as parents managed to go their own parents one better, extending the golden playroom all the way through graduate school. But the emphasis on unlimited possibilities turns out to be a new kind of prison. Many twenty-somethings find themselves immobilized by too much praise. They dare not commit to any one career, because it means giving up others, and they've never before had to close off any options. They dare not commit to a single career because they're expected to excel at it, and they're afraid they may only be ordinary. A lifetime of go-get-'em cheering presumes that one day you'll march out and take the world by storm. But what if the world doesn't notice? What if the field is too crowded, or the skills too difficult, or the child just not all that talented? It's a sad but unalterable fact that most people are average.

Parents' eager expectations can freeze children in their tracks. Even the command "follow your dreams" can be immobilizing if you're not sure what your dreams are and nothing that comes to mind seems very urgent. It's no wonder that today's twenty-somethings feel unfocused, indecisive, and terrified of making mistakes. They may move back home after college and drift from job to job. They can be stuck there, feeling paralyzed for years, even a decade.

So what should we do? How can we recover a positive view of adult life and prepare future generations to move into it? The problem has many parts. The one I'm most interested in is the increasingly late date of marriage. The average first marriage now involves a twenty-five-year-old bride and a twenty-seven-year-old groom. I'm intrigued by how patently unnatural that is. God designed our bodies to desire to mate much earlier, and through most of history cultures have accommodated that desire by enabling people to wed by their late teens or early twenties. People would postpone marriage till their late twenties only in cases of economic disaster or famine—times when people had to save up in order to be able to marry.

Young people are not too immature to marry, unless we tell them they are. Fifty years ago, when the average bride was twenty, the divorce rate was half what it is now, because the culture encouraged and sustained marriage. But if we communicate to young people that we think they're naturally incapable of making a marriage work, they will surely meet our expectation. In fact, I have a theory that late marriage contributes to an *increased* divorce rate. During those lingering years of unmarried adulthood, young people may not be getting married, but they're still falling in love. They fall in love, and break up, and undergo terrible pain, but find that with time they get over it. This is true even if they remain chaste. By the time these young people marry, they may have had many opportunities to learn how to walk away from a promise. They've been training for divorce.

Late marriage means fighting the design of our bodies, and that's never a fight we can win. In the Oscar-nominated movie *Sideways*, a small-time television actor in his early forties is about to get married. He embarks on a week-long pre-wedding debauch with his friend Miles—and he quickly sinks to depths that take even Miles by surprise. As Jack defends a particularly despicable act, he says, "I know you disapprove of what I'm doing. And I can respect that. But you just don't understand my plight."

Future historians will have to sort out our plight—how a whole generation could forget to grow up, while still attempting to raise a younger generation and lead the most powerful nation in the world through times of war and terror. The skills of adulthood are not ones we know how to use. Being kittenish, or obscene, or adorably perplexed—we can do that. But gathering the gravity and confidence that signals full maturity is beyond our capabilities. It's not youth that passed us by, but adulthood.

Frederica Mathewes-Green writes and lectures on faith and culture. Her website is www.frederica.com *and her most recent book is* The Open Door: Entering the Sanctuary of Icons and Prayer *(Paraclete).*

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Stem Cells and Babies

Maureen L. Condic

Positions on human embryonic stem-cell research tend to fall into two camps: Either anything goes, or nothing goes. Proponents of the anything-goes position assert that the potential scientific and medical benefits of embryonic stem-cell research override all other considerations—and therefore restrictions on the funding and scope of this research are unwarranted. Proponents of the nothing-goes position assert that no amount of potential medical and scientific usefulness can justify the intentional creation and destruction of nascent human life.

Attempts have been made to bridge this divide by proposing alternative sources of embryonic stem cells for research and therapeutic purposes. In a recent white paper, the President's Council on Bioethics outlined four proposals for obtaining embryonic stem cells without destroying living human embryos: obtaining stem cells from embryos that are clinically dead, removing stem cells without harming the embryo, creating non-embryonic entities that produce usable stem cells, and converting adult cells into embryonic stem cells by a process of genetic reprogramming. Each of these proposals has considerable merit as an alternative to the generation and destruction of embryos for research—yet for each there are also significant questions about scientific feasibility and ethical soundness.

One proposal that has received considerable scientific support has been to generate non-embryonic entities that can serve as a source of stem cells through a process termed Altered Nuclear Transfer (or ANT). This would involve three general steps. First, an adult cell would be removed from a patient and the DNA of that cell altered to control and direct the types of gene expression the nucleus is capable of supporting. Then, the DNA would be removed from an oocyte (an egg cell) and this enucleated oocyte fused to the altered adult cell—creating a new cell that is neither an oocyte nor an adult cell but a hybrid exhibiting the properties programmed into it by the alterations made to the adult-cell nucleus. Finally, the newly generated ANT-cell would be allowed to produce stem cells. These stem cells would be genetically identical to the patient from whom the original adult cell was taken and could be used for research and therapeutic purposes.

This ANT approach could take many possible forms. Some researchers have proposed deleting or disabling key genes that are required for early embryonic development. The cell produced following fusion of such an altered adult nucleus with an enucleated oocyte would be capable of generating embryonic stem cells—yet fundamentally incapable of orchestrating an overall embryonic pattern of development.

Such a form of ANT has caused some bioethicists to raise serious moral concerns. While the entity generated by deleting or disabling early embryonic genes would produce only an unorganized collection of stem cells, it would do so after a period of what appears to be relatively normal development. Thus, it is difficult to know with certainty whether such an entity was or was not a human embryo at some point in its development.

Recently, however, a new proposal has been made that takes a novel and scientifically powerful approach by combining the concept of ANT with the fourth alternative discussed in the white paper from the president's council: reprogramming of an adult nucleus to a stem-cell state. This new proposal, named Altered Nuclear Transfer-Oocyte Assisted Reprogramming (or ANT-OAR), has been endorsed by a number of distinguished scientists and bioethicists in a statement entitled "Creation of Pluripotent Stem Cells by Oocyte Assisted Reprogramming."

In contrast to previously proposed forms of ANT that suggested deletion of genetic information as a means of preventing embryo formation, this new proposal actively instructs the adult nucleus to enter directly into an embryonic stem-cell state without passing through any intervening developmental stages. Such a single-step conversion of an adult cell into an embryonic stem cell entirely avoids the question of whether an embryo has been created, since the cell produced by ANT-OAR never exhibits any of the properties of a single-cell embryo.

ANT-OAR makes use of a process known as epigenetic reprogramming to convert an adult cell into an embryonic stem cell. As specialized cells are generated during embryonic development, they are programmed to use only a limited amount of the total genetic information present in the nucleus to produce the proteins required for their particular function. Thus, adult skin cells and adult brain cells contain exactly the same genetic information, yet each cell type uses a different subset of the total genetic information it contains. This process of restricting the use of genetic information during embryonic development is known as epigenetic programming—programming that is not part of the DNA code itself but imposed on that code during embryonic development.

During normal development, epigenetic programming restricts both the genes a cell can use and the cell's developmental potency. A single-cell embryo is

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"totipotent" (capable of producing all the cells of the body), and has full use of all the genetic information required to produce all the cell types of the developing body. As the single-cell embryo divides to generate more cells, genes required for the earliest stages of development are progressively shut off while others are turned on. These later-developing, specialized cells no longer access the full range of genetic information—and as a result, their potency is more limited.

Embryonic stem cells are produced during development by the same process of epigenetic programming that later will produce adult cells such as skin and brain. Embryonic stem cells are scientifically and medically interesting because they are "pluripotent" (capable of generating many cell types), but they are not the same as totipotent single-cell embryos. Rather, embryonic stem cells have already undergone epigenetic restriction and cannot produce an organized body with all of its required parts. There are clear differences between totipotent single-cell embryos and pluripotent stem cells on a molecular level as well. Recent work has identified a number of genes expressed only in pluripotent stem cells. Thus, unlike totipotent single-cell embryos, pluripotent embryonic stem cells are specialized cells that have limited developmental capabilities.

The epigenetic programming established during development is normally quite stable (skin cells do not spontaneously turn into brain cells during adult life), but it is not irreversible. Indeed, the ability to clone animals, such as Dolly the sheep, by fusion of an adult cell to an enucleated oocyte demonstrates that the epigenetic programming responsible for maintaining an adult cell in a stable state can be erased by factors present in the cytoplasm of the oocyte. When cloning is successful, the adult nucleus is stripped of its epigenetic programming, and is restored to a totipotent state that can use all the genetic information present in the nucleus to orchestrate the complete program of embryonic development.

Human cloning has been proposed as a means of generating human embryos that can be destroyed to obtain embryonic stem cells. Proponents of human cloning assert that this is the only method of producing pluripotent stem cells with the same genetic make-up as adult patients. ANT-OAR accomplishes this same goal, however, by using an approach that does not involve the generation and destruction of human embryos. In this proposal, specific master genes that are required for the pluripotent stem-cell state would be turned on in an adult cell. Experiments in animal cells have shown that although these genes are required to form pluripotent stem cells during development, they are not powerful enough on their own to overcome the epigenetic programming of a mature cell and convert it to a pluripotent stem cell directly. ANT-OAR would use the cytoplasm of the oocyte to assist with the required reprogramming of the adult nucleus.

Both ANT-OAR and cloning rely on the oocyte cytoplasm to strip the epigenetic programming from the adult-cell nucleus. What happens next is entirely different. During cloning, the adult nucleus is converted to a totipotent state that will then proceed through a clear progression of developmental steps to yield pluripotent stem cells at a later time. Should the ANT-OAR proposal work, the alterations made to the adult nucleus will ensure that the cell produced by ANT-OAR enters immediately into a restricted, pluripotent state, without ever generating a totipotent embryo.

The cell produced by ANT-OAR would have all of the positive properties of a pluripotent stem cell—as well as all of the restrictions in developmental potency such cells normally exhibit. The ANT-OAR cell would not undergo any type of development to produce stem cells and would only divide to generate other cells identical to itself. Thus, if successful, ANT-OAR would produce only a single type of cell, and that cell would be unambiguously distinct from a single-cell embryo—in its molecular properties, its behavior, and its developmental potency. Moreover, the cell produced by ANT-OAR would be exactly the type of cell that is most useful to basic research and medical science: a pluripotent stem cell with the same genetic information as an adult patient.

The scientific feasibility of ANT-OAR must first be established by research in animal cells. With a relatively modest, focused scientific effort, such testing could be done rapidly. While there are no guarantees that any scientific proposal will work as predicted, this proposal is exceptionally well supported by a large body of established scientific evidence. Meanwhile, the generation of human pluripotent stem cells via ANT-OAR raises no significant moral issues, so long as human eggs and adult human cells are obtained in a medically safe and ethically sound manner.

The ANT-OAR proposal represent a scientifically and morally sound means of obtaining human pluripotent stem cells that does not compromise either the science or the deeply held moral convictions of those who oppose the destructive use of human embryos for research—which is a creative approach that can be embraced by both the anything-goes camp and the nothing-goes.

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Hitler's Mufti

David G. Dalin

In his 2004 book *The Return of Anti-Semitism*, Gabriel Schoenfeld declared that "the ancient and modern strands of anti-Semitism" have been "successfully fused today" in the Muslim world, "and from there the hatred of Jews receives its main propulsion outward." In the 2003 *Never Again? The Threat of the New Anti-Semitism*, Abraham Foxman added, "Virulent anti-Semitism is widespread throughout the Arab Middle East.... Anti-Semitism is tolerated or openly endorsed by Arab governments, disseminated by the Arab media, taught in [Muslim] schools and universities, and preached in mosques. No segment of [Islamic] society is free of its taint." And in the 1999 *Semites and Anti-Semites*, Bernard Lewis concluded, "Classical anti-Semitism is an essential part of Arab intellectual life at the present time."

It is possible to trace modern Islamic anti-Semitism back along a number of different historical and intellectual threads, but, no matter which one you choose, they all seem to pass, at one point or another, through the hands of one figure—Hitler's mufti, Hajj Amin al-Husseini, the viciously anti-Semitic grand mufti of Jerusalem and the leader of Muslim fundamentalists in Palestine, who resided in Berlin as a welcome guest of the Nazis throughout the years of the Holocaust.

The child of a wealthy and influential Palestinian Arab family, al-Husseini was born in Jerusalem in 1893. Living in Jerusalem during the 1920s, he quickly emerged as the recognized leader of the Arabs under the British government in Palestine. From his earliest years, Kenneth R. Timmerman recently noted, al-Husseini was "a ferocious opponent of Jewish immigration to Palestine," with an unrelenting hatred of the Jews and the British. His career as an anti-Semitic agitator and terrorist began on April 4, 1920, when he and his followers went on a murderous rampage, attacking Jews on the street and looting Jewish stores. He was subsequently convicted by a military tribunal of inciting the anti-Semitic violence that had resulted in the killing of five Jews and the wounding of 211 others.

Sadly, the British—recognizing his status among the Palestinians—disregarded his record and appointed him to the prestigious post of grand mufti of Jerusalem in 1922, which made him both the religious and political leader of the Palestinian Arabs. Only two months after his appointment, his propaganda, including a new translation into Arabic of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, precipitated a second anti-Jewish riot in Palestine. On August 23, 1929, al-Husseini led a massacre of sixty Jews in Hebron and another forty-five in Safad.

Then, in the early 1930s, al-Husseini began to make overtures to the new Nazi government of Germany. The alliance between Adolf Hitler and the Muslim fundamentalist world was initiated and forged by the grand mufti at the very beginning of the new Nazi regime. In late March 1933, al-Husseini contacted the German consul general in Jerusalem and requested German help in eliminating Jewish settlements in Palestine—offering, in exchange, a pan-Islamic jihad in alliance with Germany against Jews around the world. It was not until 1938, in the aftermath of British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain's infamous capitulation to Hitler at Munich, that Hajj Amin al-Husseini's overtures to Nazi Germany were officially reciprocated, but by then the influence of Nazi ideology had already grown significantly throughout the Arab Middle East.

In 1934, when the anti-Jewish Nuremberg laws were promulgated, telegrams of congratulations to Hitler were sent from all over the Islamic world—especially, as Paul Longgrear and Raymond McNemar have noted in their 2003 essay, "The Arab/Muslim Nazi Connection," from Morocco and Palestine, where the German propaganda machine had been most active. Several of the Arab political parties founded during the 1930s were modeled after the Nazi party, including the Syrian Popular Party and the Young Egypt Society, which were explicitly anti-Semitic in their ideology and programs. The leader of Syria's Socialist Nationalist Party, Anton Sa'ada, imagined himself an Arab Hitler and placed a swastika on his party's banner.

The pro-Nazi mood and increasingly anti-Jewish worldview of al-Husseini and his cohorts among the new Arab leadership was described this way by a leader of the Baath party in Syria: "We were racists, admiring Nazism, reading its books and the sources of its thought, particularly Nietzsche,... Fichte, and H.S. Chamberlain's *Foundations of the Nineteenth Century*, which revolves on race. We were the first to think of translating *Mein Kampf*. Whoever lived during this period in Damascus would appreciate the inclination of the Arab people to Nazism, for Nazism was the power which could serve as its champion, and he who is defeated will by nature love the victor."

Though he was the grand mufti of Jerusalem, al-Husseini moved his base of operations (and pro-Nazi propaganda) to Lebanon in 1938 and to Iraq in 1939, where he helped establish the strongly pro-German Rashid Ali al-Gaylani as prime minister. His role as a loyal Axis ally was increasingly appreciated by the German government, which invited him to base his activities in Berlin. On the very day that he arrived,

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November 6, 1941, Husseini met with Ernst von Weizsacker, the German foreign minister. Three weeks later, on November 28, 1941, Husseini met for the first time with Hitler. As Timmerman has correctly argued, "al-Husseini owes his place in history" to this meeting, where he offered to raise an Arab legion to help carry out Hitler's extermination of the Jews. "The mufti's close ties to Hitler, and his total embrace of Hitler's Final Solution," concludes Timmerman, "provides the common thread linking past to present. If today's Muslim anti-Semitism is like a tree with many branches, its roots feed directly off of Hitler's Third Reich."

From the outset of his stay in Berlin, al-Husseini was portrayed in Nazi propaganda as the spiritual and religious leader of Islam. On January 8, 1942, Radio Berlin reported that the mufti had "announced in a telegram to the German Führer before the whole world his adherence to the Tripartite Pact against Britain, Jews, and Communists." In a speech announcing his arrival in Germany, he called the Jews the "most fierce enemies of the Muslims" and an "ever-corruptive element" in the world. From his Arab Bureau office in Berlin, al-Husseini mobilized political and military support for the Nazi regime and organized networks of spies throughout the Middle East. As Bernard Lewis has reminded us, even Anwar Sadat, "by his own admission, worked as a German spy in British-occupied Egypt" for al-Husseini.

There is also evidence the mufti advised and assisted his German hosts in the destruction of European Jewry. His importance "must not be disregarded," insisted Adolf Eichmann's deputy Dieter Wisliceny in 1941. "The Mufti had repeatedly suggested to the various authorities with whom he was maintaining contact, above all to Hitler, Ribbentrop, and Himmler, the extermination of European Jewry." At the Nuremberg Trials, Wisliceny was even more explicit: "The mufti was one of the initiators of the systematic extermination of European Jewry and had been a collaborator and adviser of Eichmann and Himmler in the execution of this plan. He was one of Eichmann's best friends and had constantly incited him to accelerate the extermination measures. I heard him say that, accompanied by Eichmann, he had visited incognito the gas chamber of Auschwitz." On this visit to Auschwitz, al-Husseini reportedly "admonished the guards running the gas chambers to work more diligently."

In 1943 al-Husseini traveled several times to Bosnia, where he helped recruit a Bosnian Muslim S.S. company, the notorious "Hanjar troopers," who slaughtered 90 percent of Bosnia's Jews and burned "countless Serbian churches and villages." Throughout World War II, al-Husseini preached regularly on radio broadcasts to the Middle East. On November 2, 1943, less than three weeks after the initial Nazi roundup of Roman Jews and the beginning of the Nazi occupation of the Italian capital, he used German radio to broadcast one of his most virulently anti-Semitic messages: "The overwhelming egoism which lies in the character of Jews, their unworthy belief that they are God's chosen nation and their assertion that all was created for them and that other people are animals" makes them "incapable of being trusted. They cannot mix with any other nation but live as parasites among the nations, suck out their blood, embezzle their property, corrupt their morals." "Kill the Jews wherever you find them," the Mufti told his growing Arab radio audience in 1944. "This pleases God, history, and religion."

"It is hardly accidental that the beginning of the systematic physical destruction of European Jewry by Hitler's Third Reich roughly coincided with the Mufti's arrival in the Axis camp," Joseph B. Schechtmann pointed out in his 1965 book *The Mufti and the Führer*. And much of the Arab-Muslim leadership in the Middle East learned to share al-Husseini's ideas about the Jews during the Second World War.

After the defeat of the Axis powers, Hajj Amin al-Husseini escaped indictment as a war criminal at Nuremberg by fleeing to Egypt, where he received political asylum and where, shortly after his arrival, he met the young Yasser Arafat, a teenager then living in Cairo. (Arafat and al-Husseini were, in fact, distantly related: Arafat's mother was the daughter of al-Husseini's first cousin.) Arafat soon became a devoted protégé of the grand Mufti, who brought a former Nazi commando to Egypt to teach Arafat and others how to fight. Arafat first shed Jewish blood during terrorist raids against Israel in 1947.

The Mufti's mission of waging ongoing war against the Jews was continued by Arafat during the 1960s and early 1970s. In 1969, for example, the PLO recruited two former Nazi instructors, Erich Altern, a leader of the Gestapo's Jewish affairs section, and Willy Berner, an S.S. officer in the Matthausen extermination camp. Another former Nazi, Johann Schuller, was found supplying arms to the Fatah. The Belgian Jean Tireault, secretary of the neo-Nazi *La Nation Européenne*, also went on the Fatah payroll. Still another Belgian, the neo-Nazi Karl van der Put, recruited the PLO. So, too, the German neo-Nazi Otto Albrecht was arrested in West Germany with PLO identity papers, after the PLO had given him $1.2 million to buy weapons.

Arafat always revered al-Husseini, who died in 1974, as his beloved hero and mentor. In a major address in April 1985, Arafat said he took "immense pride" in being the Mufti's student and emphasized that the

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PLO "is continuing the path" he set. Close to thirty years after al-Husseini's death, Arafat referred in an August 2002 interview to "our hero al-Husseini" as a "symbol of withstanding world pressure, having remained an Arab leader in spite of demands to have him replaced because of his Nazi ties."

As Robert S. Wistrich has persuasively argued, the anti-Jewish legacy of Nazism "has proven to be especially potent" in the Arab-Islamic world, "where anti-Semitism is once again acquiring a potentially lethal charge." This new and insidious Islamic anti-Semitism, with its roots in the virulently anti-Jewish ideology of Nazism, has become pervasive throughout the Arab world. In point of fact, as Wistrich demonstrates, "there is currently a culture of hatred that permeates books, magazines, newspapers, sermons, video-cassettes, the internet, television, and radio in the Arab Middle East which has not been seen since the heyday of Nazi Germany."

Portions of the tradition of Muslim anti-Semitism date from as far back as the Middle Ages, but in recent decades, as Wistrich has suggested, the dehumanizing images of Jews and Israel that have penetrated the body politic of Islam have been sufficiently radical in tone and content to constitute a new "warrant for genocide." Something different, something new, entered the Arab mind in the twentieth century. And its origins are not particularly hard to trace. Much of this new Muslim-inspired anti-Semitism owes its development to one man: Hajj Amin al-Husseini, who so passionately supported and contributed to Hitler's Final Solution.

This unholy legacy of virulent anti-Semitism and anti-Jewish terrorism has been an enduring one: In the sixty years since the Holocaust, Hajj Amin al-Husseini has become the hero of the terrorist Palestine Liberation Organization, the founding father of the radical Palestine National Movement, and the inspiration of two generations of radical Islamic leaders to carry on Hitler's war against the Jews.

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To the Golden Gate Bridge

In 1942 when I was ten
and you were five, we got together Sundays
as I'd head north to military school,
flagging the Greyhound down. Those were not fun days:

Mother, broken by life, had left the scene;
Pearl had called father to a four-year fight.
My scruffy boots, the tell-all uniform,
spotted and rank-less, put on view the fright.

I was at fifth-grade soldiering. Then I heard
through open windows how you'd worked it out—
towers in the wind, singing above the sea,
anthems of self-belief, innate, devout—

and you became a brother instantly.
As weeks passed and I listened on that span,
your riffs of joy seemed almost tuned to ease
my chronic fear of growing into a man.

Some you did not convince as easily.
May they, drenched in despair, who could not heal,
return to light somewhere down harbor skies,
beyond the flotsam and the listening seal.

Moore Moran

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Christians and the Death Penalty

Joseph Bottum

In 1981, on the campus of Cornell University, Michael Ross murdered a young woman named Dzung Ngoc Tu. Over the next year, he raped and killed Tammy Williams, Paula Perrera, and Debra Smith Taylor. In 1983, he added Robin Stavinsky. On Easter Sunday in 1984, he abducted, sexually assaulted, and strangled Leslie Shelley and April Brunais, both just fourteen years old, after he caught them walking along a Connecticut road. Two months later, he raped and killed another Connecticut girl, the seventeen-year-old Wendy Baribeault, leaving her body behind a stone fence along the highway.

The man was a monster, and he got at least a small portion of his desserts, long delayed but nonetheless real, over twenty years later, when, on May 13, 2005, executioners in a Connecticut prison injected poison into his veins while the families of his victims watched. He gasped and shuddered, one witness reported, as the needle went home and the poison began to work. Then the color drained from his face, and he was dead: executed at last, and justly, for the destruction of his innocent, undeserving prey.

Considered as a story—but who can stop to consider this simply as a story, standing back from the sheer, bloody reality of those slaughtered girls and the brutality they suffered before their deaths? This isn't a novel, a stray bit of horror fiction, but the horrifying thing itself, the raw stuff that fiction only models, and its victims are not mere characters but genuine, living beings whose lives were broken and destroyed. Do not forget them. Dzung Ngoc Tu, Tammy Williams, Paula Perrera, Debra Smith Taylor, Robin Stavinsky, little Leslie Shelley and April Brunais, Wendy Baribeault: They were here with us, and now forever they are not, and the reason is that a man named Michael Ross found a brief pleasure in abusing their bodies and ending their young lives.

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And yet, even true stories are still stories, the kind of things we know by telling them. Dzung Ngoc Tu, Tammy Williams, Paula Perrera, Debra Smith Taylor, Robin Stavinsky, Leslie Shelley, April Brunais, Wendy Baribeault—the litany I hear over and over, the syllables that whisper in my mind every time I try to think about the moment this spring when the State of Connecticut carried out its first execution in more than forty years: even that repetition of the victim's names, in the end, appears on a page only as a storyteller's promise that *this* particular story really happened.

It is real, unbearably real, in other words, but also a story, with a purpose in the way the story goes. And taken that way, the execution of Michael Ross works more or less as we demand from such stories. It has a completeness, a satisfaction, a narrative arc. It gives the feeling of rightness and a sort of balance restored to a universe gone wrong with the taking of innocent life. It aims, as satisfying stories must, at what we used to call poetic justice: the killer killed, the blood-debt repaid with blood, death satisfied with death.

Unfortunately, it is also, in its essence, a *pagan* story, and Jesus—well, yes, Jesus turned all our stories inside out. Especially the old, old ones about blood and blood's repayment.

One hears so many bad, thoughtless, and even dangerous objections to the death penalty in the United States. That it is unconstitutionally "cruel and unusual," for instance, though the Constitution itself mentions capital crimes. Or that the large number of prisoners removed from death row in recent years by commutation and technical legal appeal some-

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how prove that hundreds of innocent convicts are on the edge of state-sanctioned death. Or that opponents of abortion are hypocrites if they don't simultaneously reject the execution of criminals. Why, I always wonder, does this never seem to cut in the opposite direction: If the issues are genuinely linked, then what about the people who oppose capital punishment while supporting legalized abortion? Aren't they equally hypocritical, and for exactly the same reason?

At the same time, one regularly hears another set of bad arguments *for* the death penalty. That it is required to teach human beings the wrongness of killing, for instance, though countries that have abolished capital punishment show no mass conversion to murder. Or that the cost of executing prisoners is significantly less than the cost of imprisoning them, though the expense of actually carrying out a death sentence in today's legal climate is enormous.

But the worst of these, for a Christian, is the argument from justice—the argument made implicitly every time we tell the story of an executed murderer. One could quarrel here about Christian pacifism and its relation to the death penalty, the hard-edged claim that the task of a believer is to stand as a sheep among the wolves or the softly sentimental notion that mercy is somehow nicer than strict justice. The question I have in mind, however, is about the status of justice in political theory.

Christians may decline to accept responsibility for government, but governing must still go on. And that governing will inevitably find itself caught in the clash between justice and mercy. Christ's teaching forgives the sinner even while it condemns the sin, and human justice and human mercy may perhaps find a unity in us as individuals if we turn the other cheek as we are taught. But at the level of any actual government—at the level of positive law, with its officers and magistrates—justice and mercy are necessarily in conflict. If judges show mercy, in any meaningful sense of the word, they do so at the explicit cost of justice; they are being *unjust* by failing to exact the penalty that justice requires.

So what kind of justice—high, low, divine, poetic—can a Christian expect in a modern nation-state? More to the point, what kind of justice can a Christian *allow* modern democracies to claim for themselves?

Michael Ross' lethal injection is a story of *high justice*: the attempt to balance the cosmic books, to stabilize a shaken universe. Agreeing to his own execution (the only way it was at all likely to happen in a state such as Connecticut, which last carried out a death penalty in 1960), Ross spoke of offering his death to "ease the pain" of his victims' families and "bring them closure." One heard that peculiar narrative word "closure" dozens of times in the news reports after his death. "I thought I would feel closure," said Debbie Dupuis, the sister of Robin Stavinsky. "I hope that there is at least some measure of relief and closure for their families," Connecticut's governor intoned.

The execution involved some open moments of the kind of vengefulness that legal systems first emerged in the ancient world to halt. "Feeling some pain?" one of the watching family members asked sarcastically as the poison first entered Ross' veins. "It was too peaceful," complained another after Ross was pronounced dead. But the closure apparently sought by almost everyone, from the murderer all the way to the governor, is at least potentially distinct from revenge in some ancient blood feud. It is, instead, the denouement of an essentially meaningful story: The universe is disordered because blood cries out from the ground, and high justice demands blood to match that blood.

There's a reasonable question of why we would grant murderers the power to bring narrative order and meaning to their lives and deaths, when this is one of the things they wrenched away from their victims. And, even more, there is a question of what a modern secular government is doing in the business of enacting such high stories.

By the right of self-determination, a legitimate state has a strong duty to defend itself, and in certain extreme circumstances the state's very existence, the entire structure of law and civil society, may possibly require the death of criminals. Thus, executions for treason and desertion in battle remain exceptions in the law of most of the European countries that have otherwise abolished the death penalty.

Then, too, a state has a responsibility to enforce positive law and exact punishment. This is true even in the case of victimless crimes, and it is perhaps particularly true in the case of crimes *with* victims. All political theories note that ancient legal systems began with the outlawing of private revenge, but the state does not thereby become a sort of hired agent or substitute avenger. That is what a theory of civil harms is for, and such torts are addressed not in criminal but civil courts, where the plaintiff, not the government, collects the monetary damages. Genuine crimes, in a modern setting, are instead committed against society and its laws—just as, in medieval England, all crimes were crimes against the king. In strict legal theory, the victims are incidental; the entire body politic is injured by a crime, and the social disorder of that crime is what a government's criminal-justice system must address.

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Sometimes this requires educating the public about the wrongness of the crime. Often it aims at rehabilitating the criminal. Always it must keep the central promise of rightly operating government: the pledge that law-breakers will prosper less than law-abiders. And, again, under certain extreme circumstances, these legitimate purposes of social justice could require the death of criminals.

In other words, both a government's right of self-defense and its duty to preserve the normal justice of the social order can potentially issue in executions. But neither of these gives the state a license to attempt either revenge or the high justice implied in the story of Michael Ross. Capital punishment may occasionally be necessary in a modern democracy, but it is never right, for the death penalty is not in a line with other punishments. A five-year sentence and a twenty-year sentence, even a life sentence, are related as more or less severe forms of imprisonment. Execution belongs to another order of punishment.

Indeed, most arguments for the essential justice of the death penalty admit this point—and even insist upon it. If murder is not like other crimes, if the spilling of innocent blood is uniquely horrifying, then the punishment of death, as the spilling of guilty blood, must also belong to a higher species of justice: not simply a more extreme version of other punishments that seek to correct social disorders, but an entirely different thing that aims at restoring the universe and matching a deadly crime with a similarly deadly punishment.

Under any Christian understanding of political theory, where does the legal system of a modern democracy gain authority to act on this high level? Certainly, many different kinds of governments over many centuries have claimed and exercised the power of life and death. But history is no explanation for why the State of Connecticut should continue to have, in this one case, a license to break free from the social aims of normal justice and pursue closure for a story of high, cosmic justice.

Another way to come at this same conclusion is by considering what exactly would grant genuine authority to complete the story of blood. If God directly commanded a death, for example: Surely that would suffice. Or if the magistrate had a covenantal mandate in a divinely ordained state like ancient Israel, with some kind of ongoing priestly warrant. "The same divine law that forbids the killing of a human being allows certain exceptions," St. Augustine noted in *The City of God*, "as when God authorizes killing by a general law or when he gives an explicit commission to an individual for a limited time."

Interestingly, among the classics of a defeated political theory—in Jacques-Benigne Bossuet's 1709 account of the divine right of kings, *Politics Drawn from the Very Words of Holy Scripture*, for instance—you can find hints of this point deployed to defend monarchies, for the legal system's power of life and death derives directly from the king's divine calling. A hundred years earlier, King James I of England wrote one of the most complete statements of divine right:

> The state of monarchy is the supremest thing upon earth; for kings are not only God's lieutenants upon earth, and sit upon God's throne, but even by God himself are called gods. . . . Kings are justly called gods, for that they exercise a manner or resemblance of divine power upon earth: for if you will consider the attributes to God, you shall see how they agree in the person of a king. God hath power to create or destroy, make or unmake, at his pleasure, to give life or send death, to judge all and to be judged nor accountable to none; to raise low things and to make high things low at his pleasure, and to God are both souls and body due. And the like power have kings: they make and unmake their subjects, they have power of raising and casting down, of life and of death, judges over all their subjects and in all causes.

During the French Revolution, the Marquis de Sade carried this analysis to its logical extreme in "Yet One More Push, Frenchmen, If You Would Be True Republicans," the pamphlet a character reads aloud during a pause in the violent sex of *Philosophy in the Boudoir*. The argument is, essentially, that the divine right of kings is true, which means that by executing Louis XVI, the republic has decisively broken with God. Lacking the authority that once descended to legal courts from the king's divine right, French magistrates can no longer act as *royal* judges with godlike power over life and death.

The extent of Sade's irony is difficult to decide: Is he serious when he mocks the king's jury for the illogic of behaving like the king—for failing to be "true republicans"—in ordering the king to be executed? *Philosophy in the Boudoir* ends with a sex murder that is apparently approved by Sade on the aesthetic grounds that the victim was older and uglier than her murderers, on the psychological grounds that sexual satisfaction is always good and the killers found pleasure in the murder, and on the theological grounds that God has been eliminated from France and thus all things are permitted.

But Sade's argument, turning upside down a point made by more reliable defenders of the divine right of kings, remains interesting. The death penalty requires

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some extraordinary authority, and if we reject the divine election of kings over us, as all Western nations have (Britain's Elizabeth II may be the last living European monarch to have been literally anointed in a Christian ceremony, during her coronation in 1953), then we have also rejected the justification for a legal system to claim to be enacting the highest story of earthly justice.

God's general providence informs history, and that providence may be revealed in the appearance of democracies in the modern world. Certain modern nations may even carry a particular providential burden: America, for instance, as an "almost-chosen people," to use Abraham Lincoln's curious phrase. But the one thing no modern state can claim is that it is anointed, and the things that require anointing it lacks authority to do: the imposition of a state religion, for example, and the exaction of the death penalty, for precisely the same reason. Christians would have to engage in a national idolatry to suppose that all the acts allowed in ancient Israel are permissible in Connecticut.

"There is a growing tendency, both in the Church and in civil society, to demand that the death penalty be applied in a very limited way or even that it be abolished completely," John Paul II wrote in his 1995 encyclical *Evangelium Vitae*. "The problem must be viewed in the context of a system of penal justice ever more in line with human dignity and thus, in the end, with God's plan for man and society. The primary purpose of the punishment which society inflicts is to redress the disorder caused by the offense." And the result of viewing the problem in this way is that the death penalty should be "very rare and practically non-existent."

In Romans 13, St. Paul insists that "the authorities that exist have been established by God," and these authorities "bear the sword," for "rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong." This is the biblical text most commonly cited to allow or even require Christian support for the death penalty. But as one who had seen Roman tax-farming in operation and knew the Romans had carried out the execution of Jesus, Paul certainly had no illusions that the reigning authority of Rome was anointed or godly. The "sword" he mentions is a metaphor for police powers that does not necessarily imply approval of the death penalty. And we have a way to read Romans 13, as pertaining only to ordinary social justice, with John Paul II's insistence that "the primary purpose of the punishment which society inflicts is to redress the disorder caused by the offense."

Already in 1992 the *Catechism* suggested current Catholic thought on the death penalty was not what strong proponents of capital punishment wish it to be. Then in 1996 further changes were made to the *Catechism* to bring it in line with *Evangelium Vitae*. It was at a press conference announcing these changes that Cardinal Ratzinger, now Pope Benedict XVI, used the phrase "a development of doctrine" to describe how the death penalty was being perceived in Rome.

The "development" is less clear than it may seem. Through the Middle Ages, Christian philosophers and theologians developed a set of careful distinctions concerning courts and penalties, and one of their central aims was to limit the punishments that might be imposed by otherwise unconstrained rulers. But something odd happened during the Enlightenment. Voltaire came across the anti-death-penalty arguments of an Italian criminologist named Cesare Beccaria and promptly used them, with enormous success, as yet another weapon in his war against Christianity. The traditional Christian teachings, which had typically functioned to restrict the severity of criminal sentences, were suddenly declared to have been teachings *in favor* of torture and the death penalty.

So successful was the attack that many commentators today still accept Voltaire's terms. Whether they defend or reject the death penalty, they all seem to believe the patristic and medieval writers accepted capital punishment not merely as necessary at the time but as required by justice at all times. The current position of the *Catechism* thus appears a radical change from earlier positions—as it may be, from the positions of some theological figures, but not as many as the historical commentaries on capital punishment would lead us to suppose.

Regardless, John Paul II's analysis in *Evangelium Vitae* points toward two key elements of the way a Christian might view contemporary political theory and the place of the death penalty.

The first is his emphasis upon the inherent dignity of the person, particularly in a modern world that seems intent on compromising this dignity. Circumstances alone dictate when capital punishment is necessary for a government's self-defense and preservation of the social order. But in a culture that seems to have embraced death with widespread abortion and euthanasia, the correct prudential judgment would be *never* to impose the death penalty.

Obviously the penal goal of rehabilitating the criminal is destroyed by capital punishment. But the other medicinal goals of social justice—educating the public and redressing the disorders caused by the crime—can be lost as well when the culture is in an especially disordered social situation. To make a show of the value of life with the death penalty, in a nation flirting with

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death, only teaches the public that yet more life is valueless and yet more life can be destroyed. This is the truth lurking behind the otherwise unfair complaint of hypocrisy in opposing abortion while allowing capital punishment. The distinction between the innocent killed by abortion and the guilty killed by execution is not likely to persuade many people in a culture that cannot bring itself to rescind its license of murder in the womb.

But John Paul II's deeper point is his second. Many of his encyclicals are meditations upon a single biblical text. And so, in one sense, *Evangelium Vitae* is nothing but a reading of the passages about Cain and Abel in the Book of Genesis, as seen through the lens of the New Testament revelation and applied to the modern world. "By his death," John Paul II writes, "Jesus sheds light on the meaning of life and the death of every human being." Life and death in the story of Cain and Abel, however, are curious things. Abel's blood cries out from the ground, but the Lord refuses to allow anyone to impose the penalty.

Political theory might read this to mean that only private vengeance is being prohibited: The murderer cannot be condemned, because until Cain builds the first city, there are no authorized public magistrates to judge and punish him. But *Evangelium Vitae* is after something else. The biblical story emphasizes the reality of the blood-debt and the universe thrown out of balance by murder—and nonetheless adds a prohibition against claiming repayment for that debt.

If Jesus Christ "sheds light on the meaning of life and the death of every human being," we can see in that light both how blood demands repayment and how Jesus has forever done the repaying with his death. In *Evangelium Vitae*, John Paul II holds to a delicate line. This is not necessarily a full-blown Anselmian theory of atonement, but it is at least a recognition that two elements in the Cain and Abel story are vital for Christians: the genuine truth that spilled blood calls for justice, and the refusal to demand that this blood-debt be paid with yet more blood.

To leave the argument against the death penalty in the hands of those who no longer much believe this Christian story is dangerous. The people who think there is no such thing as a blood-debt are always surprised to see crowds outside penitentiaries where executions are about to take place, chanting for the execution. But those crowds appear at executions in the United States for a reason—because blood really does cry out from the ground. "He didn't suffer as much" as his victims, one bereaved parent objected at Michael Ross' death. Without the Christian revelation to restrain it, the sense of a blood-debt that must be paid will only grow.

When the jury brought in a sentence of execution for the man in Texas who had dragged to death a black man tied to his truck with a chain, one spokesman for the local African-American community announced that he was normally against the death penalty, but in this case it was justified repayment in blood for two hundred years of lynching. Horrible as that crime was, this is a frightening thing to hear. The distinction between torts and crimes, between harms done to individuals and evils done to society, is breaking down across America.

You can see it in the recent emergence of civil suits for damages from murders, and the congressional orders for changes in trial procedures to accommodate the victims' families during the Oklahoma City bombing trials, and the provisions of every new bill for victims' rights, and the kind of testimony increasingly allowed during sentencing hearings. You can see it, perhaps most of all, in the thought, expressed by nearly everyone at Michael Ross' execution, that the state's criminal-justice system was paying something back to the families of his victims. Even Michael Ross came to believe it—came, in fact, to *demand* it, fighting every attempt to save him—and it is a primitive and pre-Christian understanding of justice.

The divine right of kings was a short-lived political theory, swept under by rival theories in early modern times. A new understanding of the limited sovereignty of government emerged, and one of the primary causes was the gradually developing awareness that Christianity had thoroughly demythologized the state. But that is not, by itself, a stable condition. Without constant pressure from the New Testament's revelation of Christ's death and resurrection, the state always threatens to rise back up as an idol. And one sign of a government's overreaching is its claim of power to balance the books of the universe—to repay blood with blood.

Dzung Ngoc Tu, Tammy Williams, Paula Perrera, Debra Smith Taylor, Robin Stavinsky, Leslie Shelley, April Brunais, Wendy Baribeault: These were real people, girls and young women raped and killed, and their blood cries out from the ground. But high justice for their deaths—the story of the killer killed, the narrative we want to give us closure—is something we cannot permit the State of Connecticut to wield. FT

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Robert Alter's Fidelity

Alan Jacobs

As the Italians say, *traduttori, traditori*: translators are traitors. But the translator who shrugs and—cheerfully or resignedly—agrees that "every translation is an interpretation, after all" has too readily embraced the way of the *traditore*. The translator who strives for strict fidelity, even knowing its elusiveness, will be less treacherous. In translation, fidelity is the ultimate imperative and trumps every other virtue: even clarity or readability.

Translators of the Bible seem often to forget this, if indeed they believe it at all. In the introduction to his extraordinary recent translation, *The Five Books of Moses*, Robert Alter points out that modern translations operate under the (perhaps unconscious) "feeling that the Bible, because of its canonical status, has to be made accessible—indeed, transparent—to all." Alter is certainly right that modern translators have this feeling, and obey it, but the Bible's "canonical status" is less to blame than a particular conception of how the Bible *functions* in the lives of believers.

THE FIVE BOOKS OF MOSES: A TRANSLATION WITH COMMENTARY

by Robert Alter
W.W. Norton, 1,064 pp., $39.95.

Almost all modern translations into English—even versions like the recent "Tanakh Translation" of the Jewish Publication Society—owe something to the zeal of such early English Christian translators as John Wycliffe and William Tyndale and their belief that the Bible must be made clear to the common reader. Near the end of the fourteenth century Wycliffe wrote, "No man is so rude a scholar but that he may learn the gospel according to its simplicity." A century and a half later, Tyndale would utter—or so reports John Foxe, in his *Acts and Monuments* (1583)—the same thought in more vivid language. Responding to a "divine, reputed for a learned man," who had criticized Tyndale's views on Scripture, the great translator declared, "If God spare my life, ere many years I will cause a boy that driveth the plough shall know more of the Scriptures than thou dost."

It is often said that Wycliffe and Tyndale believed in a characteristic Protestant idea called "the perspicuity of Scripture"—an effective denial that the Scriptures are secret or occult, accessible only to those with special training or institutional authority. Rather, in the words of the Westminster Confession of Faith, "those things which are necessary to be known, believed, and observed for salvation are so clearly propounded, and opened in some place of Scripture or other, that not only the learned, but the unlearned, in a due use of the ordinary means, may attain unto a sufficient understanding of them." Or, as Martin Luther tersely put it—evoking the scene on the road to Emmaus when the risen Christ "opened the Scriptures" to a pair of bewildered disciples—"Christ has opened our understanding to grasp the Scriptures."

Now, these authors were quick to admit that many particular *passages* in Scripture are, as Luther has it, "obscure and abstruse." "All things in Scripture are not alike plain in themselves," says Westminster, "nor alike clear unto all." Nevertheless, men like Wycliffe and Tyndale have often been *thought* to say something more radical—that, thanks to the work of the Holy Spirit, the *whole* of Scripture is transparent to the humble but earnest interpreter. Whether they believed

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this or not, many of their followers do; and later translators of Scripture have operated under the (again, often unconscious) assumption that the ideal experience of reading Scripture is one in which clarity manifests itself fully and immediately.

Undergirding this assumption is, I think, a memory of Christ's disturbing statement: "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children." Does this suggest that any translation that presents more difficulties to the "little children" than to the "wise and understanding" is somehow un-Christian? The idea may seem absurd, but it would be unwise to underrate the pressure of such thoughts in an assertively egalitarian, democratizing, and anti-elitist culture like our own today. Only in such a culture would something like "dynamic equivalence" models of translation be developed, because dynamic equivalence—which encourages translators to ask how *we* in our time and place might say whatever the Bible is taken to say—allows one to deal with difficult passages in the original text not by translating them but by interpreting their obscurities out of existence. Such passages must be cleared away, whenever possible, in order to make the crooked places straight and the rough places plain. The simple and problem-free translation then offers itself as evidence of the simplicity and problem-freeness of the biblical text itself. The translators thus stand to their readers *in loco parentis*: The "little children" never have to know what struggles their scholarly fathers undertook in order to protect them from the agonies of interpretive confusion.

It is noteworthy that Tyndale never thought to adopt such a strategy, despite his concern that the boy at the plow know the Bible. He understood perfectly well that many of the English words a faithful translation required him to employ would be unknown to many of his readers; however, his response to this problem was not to use only common words but to append to his translation a glossary of difficult terms. (At a time when real dictionaries were unheard of, this was a brilliant and innovative solution. Alas, Tyndale did not live to implement it.) Otherwise, readers would be in the lamentable situation of being unable to distinguish Tyndale's words from those of the text; and if he intruded his own words—even if those words were meant only to clarify or explain the Bible's—he would, by his own lights, have become a traitor rather than a translator.

Likewise, Wycliffe, for all his faith in the power of boys who drive plows to know their Bibles, makes it clear that Scripture exhibits its clarity only to those who undergo the lengthy *intellectual* discipline of submitting to its authority: "The faithful whom he calls in meekness and humility of heart, whether they be clergy or laity, male or female, bending the neck of their inner man to the logic and style of Scripture will find in it the power to labour and the wisdom hidden from the proud." God indeed reveals to the "little children" what is hidden from the "wise and understanding," but transforming oneself into a little child is the arduous work of a lifetime. Christ's yoke is easy and his burden light, but we don't like bending our necks to receive it—and no translation, however it accommodates itself to our language and understanding, can change *that*.

In criticizing the various "dynamic equivalence" models of translation, I lament what Robert Alter calls "the heresy of explanation"—"the use of translation as a vehicle for *explaining* the Bible rather than representing it in another language, [which] in the most egregious instances . . . amounts to explaining away the Bible." But for Alter there is no simple, straightforward alternative model of translation that by the application of some supposedly "literal" equation can magically achieve fidelity. The situation is too complicated for that, especially when languages as different as Hebrew and English are involved.

The complexity is fully recognized and acknowledged by Alter, who in a long and distinguished career has written with authority about the history of the novel and about biblical literature. He is professor of Hebrew and Comparative Literature at Berkeley, and his climb up the sheer face of the pentateuchal mount resembles some of the great monuments of humanistic scholarship more than the work of the rabbis: His interest in Scripture is evidently literary and cultural. (Vladimir Nabokov's work on Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin* is probably the single closest analogue to what Alter achieves in *The Five Books of Moses*.) In the 1980s he wrote *The Art of Biblical Narrative* and *The Art of Biblical Poetry*, and with Frank Kermode edited *The Literary Guide to the Bible*. More recently he has turned his hand to translation, first of Genesis, then of the vast biblical tale (largely consisting of the two books of Samuel) that he calls *The David Story*, and now the whole of the Pentateuch. To his scholarly accomplishments he adds an elegant English style, and he seems as prepared as a scholar can be to address the philological, historical, and literary problems that arise when one contemplates representing an ancient Hebrew text in modern English.

What to do, for instance, with *waw*? No problem is more constant for the translator from the Hebrew. *Waw* is a particle, attached to the beginning of many

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clauses, that, if translated as a word, is usually translated as "and." The preface to the Tanakh translation, however, points out that in biblical Hebrew *waw* has "the force not only of 'and' but also of 'however,' 'but,' 'yet,' 'when,' and any number of other such words and particles, or none at all that can be translated into English."

Therefore, these translators say, "Always to render it as 'and' is to misrepresent the Hebrew rather than be faithful to it." In a sense this is surely true; on the other hand, to use many different words to translate a single particle whose variations in meaning must, in Hebrew, be determined by the context is also a misrepresentation, just of a different kind.

As a case study in such difficulties, Alter cites Genesis 24, which begins with Abraham commissioning a servant to find a wife for Isaac. Alter focuses on verses 16 to 20, in which the servant encounters the extraordinary hospitality of a beautiful young woman named Rebekah, and points out that this passage contains fifteen instances of *waw*. He points out that the Revised English Version uses only five "ands" in the passage (as does the Tanakh translation). Alter, by contrast, gives us "and" all fifteen times:

> And she came down to the spring and filled her jug and came back up. And the servant ran toward her and said, "Pray, let me sip a bit of water from your jug." And she said, "Drink, my lord," and she hurried and tipped down her jug on one hand and let him drink, and she let him drink his fill and said, "For your camels, too, I shall draw water until they drink their fill." And she hurried and emptied her jug into the trough, and she ran again to the well to draw water and drew water for all his camels.

Why does Alter do this? It is not because he is unaware of the many subtle variations of *waw*. Nor is it because he follows an iron law that a Hebrew word (or particle) must always be translated with the same English word; he does not in fact follow such a law. Rather, he wishes, first, to represent the repetitions that would have been very noticeable to anyone listening to this text being read aloud—which is how almost everyone who knew the story in ancient Israel would have encountered it, since literacy was uncommon and confined largely to the priestly orders. (Thus when, in the reign of King Josiah, the priest Hilkiah discovers the long-lost book of the Law, it is read aloud first to the king and then to the whole people.) Moreover, the repetition gives a certain urgency to the story: In precisely the same way, people telling a breathless tale in English even today will insert after every sentence an identical "and then . . . and then . . . and then."

But why does this passage call for such breathlessness? What's so remarkable about Rebekah's offering water to the servant and his camels? Alter points out that the text's early listeners would have known that "a camel after a long desert journey can drink as much as twenty-five gallons of water, and there are ten camels here whom Rebekah offers to water 'until they drink their fill.'" In an environment in which water was rare and highly prized, Rebekah's action marks her as a heroine of hospitality: Her generosity is as remarkable as her beauty.

But of course no translation, however faithful, can convey such information, can it? Ah, that's what *commentary* is for. In his remarkable book *Religious Reading*, Paul Griffiths describes the curious genre of writing we call "commentary." The genre originates in response to sacred writing, but eventually finds its way to other sorts of texts: legal, political, literary, and so on. Alter's reflections on the Pentateuch are evidently not the product of "religious reading": It is the *artistry* of the Scriptures that he is at greatest pains to stress, and both his translation and his commentary are at their best when they illuminate that artistry.

But, says Griffiths, to be a true commentary, a written work must exhibit three features: First, "some other work [must] be overtly present in it"; second, indications of the presence of that other work "should dominate" the commentary, "either quantitatively or qualitatively"; and third, the structure of the commentary, "the order in which material occurs in it, should be given to it by" that other work. Griffiths also makes the helpful suggestion that you can tell that a work is truly a commentary by excising all "direct quotation, paraphrase, and summary" of that other work from it: If the result is something senseless, you're dealing with a commentary. This point enables us to see why many works of biblical and literary criticism are not commentaries: They possess their own structures, their own arguments, and would not be rendered incomprehensible even by the excision of most of their references to the books they are supposedly about.

There is nothing wrong with such non-commentarial criticism, but it usually does not, and certainly need not, treat the "other work" with reverence: It does not consider the other work as a *master* work, while commentary does—even when it wants to overthrow the work that is currently, however lamentably, its master. (The passive-aggressive duplicity of much biblical commentary was seen with shocking clarity by Kierkegaard: "Christian scholarship is the Church's prodigious invention to defend itself against the Bible, to ensure that we can continue to be good Christians

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without the Bible coming too close. . . . We would be sunk if it were not for Christian scholarship! Praise be to everyone who works to consolidate the reputation of Christian scholarship, which helps to restrain the New Testament, this confounded book which would, one, two, three, run us all down if it got loose.")

It is a rare thing to find scholars willing not only to treat another text as a master work, but also to devote all their skill to illuminating that master work, revealing it in its best and clearest light. Robert Alter is a masterful scholar and a critic of exemplary sensitivity and tact who, both as translator and as commentator, has placed himself wholly in the service of the artfulness of the Torah. It is *because* he has been so attentive in his commenting that he can afford to be so daring in his translation, so immune to the "heresy of explanation," so faithful to the literary details of the text that other translators either see as impediments or do not see at all. Conversely, it is his adherence to this specifically literary model of fidelity in representation that leads him into commentary that far exceeds the demands of mere annotation.

The conventions of modern publishing allow Alter to embrace the biblical text only by introductions—to the whole project and to individual books—and by comments at the foot of the page. There are, thankfully, no note numbers, only italicized phrases in the comments indicating the passage being addressed; the biblical text is unmarked, so it is easy to ignore the notes and pursue the narrative when one wishes. But of course the reader discerns the presence of the notes, and when they are long and detailed, cannot resist them. Nor should they be resisted; they're wonderful.

Take, for example, the concluding verses of Exodus 25, which describe—rather unclearly, it must be said—the shape of an ornate lamp stand to be placed in the Tabernacle. Here is how the instructions and the chapter conclude: "And you shall make its seven lamps, and its lamps shall be mounted and give light in front of it, and its tongs and its fire-pans—pure gold. With a talent of pure gold shall it be made together with all these furnishings. And see, and make it by their pattern which you are shown on the mountain."

By preserving the parataxis in a dignified sequence of "ands," and by maintaining the repeated direct address—"you shall"—Alter clearly indicates both the ceremonial character of the Tabernacle's construction and the fact that these laws originate in personal communication from the Lord to Moses. The latter point is, of course, emphasized in the specific reference to the revelation on Mount Sinai, but Alter's translation of all these commandments reveals that the personal dimension never departs from them.

By contrast, the colloquial New Living Translation relates the instructions so laconically and impersonally that you would think Moses had picked up the lampstand at Target: "Make a lampstand of pure, hammered gold. . . . You will need seventy-five pounds of pure gold for the lampstand and its accessories." In his general introduction to the translation, Alter emphasizes the importance of *diction* to the translator of the Torah: The language of biblical narrative, and still more of biblical poetry, is elevated in comparison to daily speech. In a society such as ours, where the same informality of speech reigns on television talk shows, on the floors of the Senate, and in the pulpits of churches, the importance of such differentiation may not seem evident. But Alter makes a convincing case that it was important to the biblical authors.

Moreover, in his commentary Alter shrewdly notes that the reference to Moses' mountaintop vision "reflects an effort to anchor the instructions for the Tabernacle, which look like an independent literary unit, in the narrative context that in effect they disrupt." That is, we are forcibly reminded here of the overarching story—the story of the Lord's careful provision for his covenant people—which the numbing detail of instructions may cause us sometimes to forget.

And this is not an isolated example. Just two chapters later the altar is described in similar terms: "And you shall make poles for the altar, poles of acacia wood and overlay them with bronze. And its poles shall be brought through the rings, and the poles shall be on the two sides of the altar when it is carried. Hollow boarded you shall make it, as He showed you on the mountain, thus they shall do." Here again the reminder of the vision the Lord granted Moses on Sinai—but with an addition, the puzzling shift to the third person: "thus they shall do." As Alter's commentary notes, "they" are the Israelites, so that the force of the passage is something like this: "God has so taught Moses how to build the altar, and the people of Israel will carry it accordingly." The King James Version doesn't quite get this, and assumes that that last clause means, "so shall they make it." But most modern translations—even including my favorite one, the recent English Standard Version—simply ignore the clause altogether. (The Tanakh translation renders the clause, "so shall they be made," which inexplicably makes the altar plural.)

It is true that the clause, with its sudden shift of grammatical person, is difficult to construe. But Alter assumes that it is there for a reason, indeed for a literary reason (though here, as is usual in Scripture, the literary serves the theological): It is a reminder of the force and point of the whole narrative that takes Israel

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from Egyptian captivity to the Promised Land. "Thus they shall do" reminds us that while it is Moses who receives the instructions, they are given—the Ark and Tabernacle are given—for the spiritual health of the people of Israel. Long after the death of Moses, the people will still carry, by those long poles, the altar, along with the other precious objects the Lord reveals to Moses; and when the Ark of the Covenant is taken from them by their enemies, their hearts will be broken; and when the Ark is restored to them, their King, David, will respond by "whirling with all his might before the LORD girt in a linen ephod, . . . leaping and whirling before the LORD." (So Alter gives us the scene in his magnificent rendering of *The David Story*.) So that one clause, so neglected by most translators, opens us to an expanse of covenant history that goes beyond even the great bulk of the Pentateuch. Who are "they"? "They" are, simply, Israel.

It is this Israel—a single nation persisting somehow across all the centuries, personified in the name of its father, the striver-with-God first known as Jacob—to whom Moses speaks in the first chapters of Deuteronomy. Alter rightly stresses the peculiarity of this speech. The generation of Israelites who came into the wilderness were judged faithless by the Lord because they were afraid to claim the land that the Lord had prepared for them. They heeded (so we are told in the book of Numbers) the ten timid spies rather than Joshua and Caleb, the bold ones who were ready to risk all to enter the land of milk and honey. They therefore must continue wandering until they die in the wilderness, so that almost everyone Moses addresses in his great homily is under the age of twenty. Yet, Alter notes,

> Moses repeatedly speaks as though they were all direct participants in or observers of the episodes he mentions. There is, I would say, a slide of identification between one generation and another. Most of those listening to Moses' words could not literally have seen the things of which he speaks, but the people is imagined as a continuous entity, bearing responsibility through historical time as a collective moral agent. It is this assumption that underwrites the hortatory flourish, repeated in several variations, "Not with our fathers did the LORD seal this covenant, but with us—we that are here today, all of us alive."

This is truly an extraordinary claim by Moses, because in a very obvious sense it *was* the fathers of his audience with whom God had sealed His covenant. But the obvious sense is not, here, the correct one. Moses is teaching the young people before him that the covenant is renewed in every generation: Every generation *is* Israel, as fully as Moses is, as fully as Jacob himself was.

Alter, as a reader mindful of artfulness, is constantly alert to the ways the Pentateuch subtly incorporates the grand story of Israel into the details of the text—even (or especially) those details that most translators and commentators ignore. And not just details, but even great swaths of text that interpreters tend to read cynically or condescendingly. The excruciatingly specific instructions that we have been considering—given twice, in full—are treated by many modern commentators as evidence that (as Alter put it in his *Art of Biblical Narrative*) "the redactors were in the grip of a kind of manic tribal compulsion, driven again and again to include units of traditional material . . . for reasons they themselves could not have explained"; and by other commentators as evidence of a priestly caste determined to make its own responsibilities and obsessions central to Scripture.

Alter considers such assumptions "ungenerous." He grants that the priestly authors of the Hebrew Bible were doubtless sensitive to "the concerns of their own sacerdotal guild," but he also doubts that so cynically simplistic an explanation for strange textual features is adequate to the complexity of the biblical text. For the devotee of the documentary hypothesis, every puzzling passage is an opportunity to introduce another capital letter (J, E, D, P) denoting another source or another unnamed redactor. But Alter prefers to "assume that the ancient writers and their audience had different ideas [than ours] about literary unity and about how story related to law." This leads him consistently to make the charitable presumption that the biblical authors knew what they were doing, which in turn allows him to exert his considerable critical skills to imagine what that might have been.

The result is a translation-and-commentary that indeed shows the unfamiliar and often unexpected literary excellence of the Pentateuch. And because Alter (unlike Kierkegaard's Christian scholars) has no interest in "protecting" us from the biblical text, his work also, however unwittingly, provides devotional encouragement to one who would read this text "religiously." Reading the edgy, rhythmical prose of Alter's translation, and consulting his tactful but richly woven commentary, such a reader comes away with a deepened sense of the providential care of the Lord for his Israel, the minute particularity of the covenantal relationship initiated by this God who allows not a sparrow to fall but by His will and numbers the very hairs of our heads. Has a story ever been at once so comprehensive, so intricate, and so integral as the one Alter gives us here? One is tempted to call it inspired. FT

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The Church's Way of Speaking

Robert Louis Wilken

When St. Augustine abandoned the teaching of rhetoric in Milan to enroll for baptism, he asked St. Ambrose, the bishop of Milan, what to read in the Scriptures "to make me readier and fitter to receive so great a grace"? Ambrose told him to read the prophet Isaiah. Augustine took his advice, but as soon as he took the book in hand he was perplexed by what he read. "I did not understand the first passage of the book," he writes, and he thought "the whole would be equally obscure." So Augustine laid it aside, as he explains, "to be resumed when I had more practice in the Lord's style of language."

In dominico eloquio—it is an arresting phrase. For the Christian reader Isaiah is a demanding and difficult book once one strays beyond the familiar passages cited in the New Testament or commonly read in Christian worship (Isaiah 9 at Christmas, Isaiah 53 during Holy Week). To the uninitiated, the first chapter is particularly daunting with its arcane oracles against Judah and Jerusalem: "Ah, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, offspring of evildoers, sons who deal corruptly. They have forsaken the Lord, they have despised the Holy One of Israel."

For someone like Augustine, formed by the poetry of Virgil and the philosophy of Plotinus, the opening verses must have seemed embarrassingly parochial, taken up as they are with the fortunes of the ancient Israelites centuries earlier. Words such as "sinful nation," "holy one of Israel," "daughter of Zion," "new moon and Sabbath" would have sounded alien, and anthropomorphisms like "I will vent my wrath on my enemies" or "turn my hand against you" would have offended his cultivated spiritual sensibility.

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Yet Augustine called Isaiah's language "the Lord's style of language," and he recognized that if he were to enter the Church he would have to learn this new tongue, hear it spoken, grow accustomed to its sounds, read the books that use it, learn its idioms, and finally speak it himself. He had to embark on a journey to acquaint himself with the mores of a new country. Becoming a Christian meant entering a strange and often alien world.

In the early Church, catechumens were received at the great vigil of Easter, beginning on Saturday evening where the creed was "handed over." As Bishop Ambrose realized, there was more to becoming a Christian than putting the creed to memory and being instructed in the "mysteries." Christian catechesis meant learning the distinctively Christian language formed by the Scriptures. And among the books of the Bible, Isaiah was preeminent: an evangelist as well as a prophet, according to Jerome.

The "faith" is not simply a set of doctrinal propositions, creedal affirmations, and moral codes. It is a world of discourse that comes to us in language of a particular sort. And language, as we discover when we study a foreign tongue, is not simply an instrument for ideas, beliefs, and sentiments. Language defines who we are; it molds how a people think, how they see the world, how they respond to persons and events, even how they feel. Thinking and understanding, like memory, are not solitary acts; they are social, wedded to the language we share with others. If we forget how to speak our language, we lose something of ourselves. "What is pronounced strengthens itself," the Polish poet Czeslaw Milosz once wrote. "What is not pronounced tends to non-existence."

But the language of a people or a country is not the only kind of language. There are also languages within

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languages. Just as there is a language proper to biology or to medicine, so there is a language proper to Christianity. Our beliefs, our moral convictions, and our attitudes are carried by very specific words and images. Words, not ideas, bring into focus with compactness and intensity what is honored and cherished. They are the indispensable carriers of the Church's faith as it is handed on from generation to generation.

Think, for example, how many terms Christians use in a distinctive way: Father, Son, Spirit, faith, hope, love, grace, sin, mercy, repentance, forgiveness, image of God, flesh, kingdom, lamb of God, suffering servant, righteousness, see (as in "blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God"), know (as in "know the truth"), believe, truth (as in "I am the truth"), creation, "male and female he made them," passion (as in the Passion of Christ), the face of God, *Kyrie eleison*. And that is not to mention the many place names with extra meaning: Jerusalem, Mount Zion, Egypt, Galilee, Sinai, Carmel, Damascus, the Mount of Olives, Bethlehem, Nazareth, Golgotha. Or the names of persons: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Sarah, Rebecca, Moses, Samuel, David, Solomon, Isaiah, Paul, James, Mary, Mary Magdalene, Peter.

All of these words come from the Scriptures, for the basic lexicon of Christian speech is the Bible. Indeed, with some few exceptions—the Greek term *homoousios* (one in being with the Father) in the Nicene Creed being one example—the distinctively Christian vocabulary is almost wholly drawn from the Bible. Though Christians may speak English or Spanish or Arabic or Russian, they nevertheless use another language, a language within their native language, that is uniquely and recognizably Christian.

Consider the difference between the phrase "Happy Easter" and "Christ is risen. He is risen indeed. Alleluia." The one is the language of our society, the other the Church's speech. Or take the words "nature" and "creation." The first is the conventional term in our society to refer to the world of plants and animals and mountains and oceans—what we call the "natural world." "Creation" is the term used by the Bible and Christians to point to a Creator and the world as ordered and purposeful. Instead of revered ancestors, Christians speak of saints. When we are speaking of Christ's birth, we speak of the Incarnation.

Even some of our prosaic terms are unique: We have a "pope" rather than a "president"; we say "bishop" instead of "governor"; and we say "council" or "synod" instead of "convention." Christians even have a unique term to refer to the community to which they belong: "Church."

There is a *consuetudo loquendi ecclesiastica*, Augustine said—the Church's customary way of speaking. As an example, he gave the word "martyr," the term used by Christians for what the Romans call *vir*, or "hero." Recall the opening words of the *Aeneid*, the great Roman epic. *Arma virumque cano*—"Arms and the man I sing": of the making of war and of a hero. The term *vir* had a venerable history in Latin, and from one perspective it seemed fitting for the martyrs. But Augustine thought Christians should avoid it and use a distinctively Christian word for their valor. The word "martyr" bore overtones that were absent from "hero," and "hero" carried connotations that would be offensive to a Christian martyr.

"Martyr" was, of course, a biblical term meaning "witness," and it is used with a specific sense in the book of Acts. Again and again, the disciples are called "witnesses of the Resurrection"—people who knew Christ during his earthly sojourn and to whom the risen Christ appeared. Accordingly a martyr is one who knows Christ and bears witness in death to the living Lord. By comparison the term *vir* seemed colorless and anemic when applied to such faithful and courageous witnesses to the faith. In a sermon on the celebration of the martyrdom of Cyprian, St. Augustine highlighted another term used by Christians for the martyrs. *Natales*, dates of birth, designated the days of martyrdom:

> Today we celebrate the birthday of the most glorious martyr, Cyprian. This expression, *natales*, is regularly employed by the Church in this way, so that it calls the precious deaths of the martyrs their "birthdays." This expression, I repeat, is regularly employed by the Church, to the extent that even those who do not belong to her join her in using it. Is there anyone to be found, I ask you, and I do not mean just in this city of ours, but throughout the whole of Africa and the regions overseas, and not only any Christian, but any pagan or Jew, or even heretic, who does not call today the birthday of the martyr Cyprian?
>
> Why is this, brothers and sisters? What date he was born on, we do not know; and because he suffered today, it is today that we celebrate his birthday. We would not celebrate that other day, even if we knew when it was. On that day he contracted original sin, while on this day he overcame all sin. On that day he came forth from the wearisome confines of his mother's womb into this light, which is so alluring to our eyes of flesh; but on this day he went away from the deep darkness of nature's womb to that light, which sheds such blessing and good fortunes upon the mind.

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Another suggestive example is the Latin word *passio*, "passion." It occurs in 1 Thessalonians, "that each one of you know how to take a wife for himself in holiness and honor, not in the passion of lust like heathens who do not know God." Augustine judged this translation unacceptable because "passion" was the word used for Christ's suffering and death. "In the Church's customary way of speaking" he said, the term "passion" is not used in a pejorative sense (as in the phrase from 1 Thessalonians—the "passion of lust"). It should be reserved for the suffering of Christ and the martyrs. Latin-speaking Christians also used *altare* rather than *ara*, the conventional Latin term for "altar." For "pray," they preferred *orare* to *rogare*, the more common Roman word.

Augustine even thought that Christians should avoid the Roman names for the days of the week—Monday, *dies Lunae*, meant the moon's day; Wednesday, *dies Mercurii*, the day of Mercury. "We do not like this practice," says Augustine, "and we wish Christians would amend their custom and not employ the pagan name." And then he adds: "Christians have a language of their own that they can use." Augustine preferred the simple numeration of days—first, second, third—a practice that is kept to this day in the Latin breviary (*feria prima*, *feria secunda*, etc.).

The faith, then, is embedded in language. It is not a set of abstract beliefs or ideas, but a world of shared associations and allusions with its own beauty and sonority, inner cohesion and logic, emotional and rhetorical power. The Church's way of speaking is a collection of the words and images that have formed the thinking and actions of those who have known Christ. The faith they confessed cannot be divorced from the words they used, nor the words uprooted from the lives of their speakers. Christian thinking is inescapably historical.

Christian speech is not primarily the technical vocabulary of Christian doctrine: "substance," "essence," "one person and two natures," "prevenient grace," "atonement," "transubstantiation." It is the language of the Psalms, the stories of the patriarchs, the parables of the gospels, the moral vocabulary of St. Paul's epistles. Though Christians became comfortable with the philosophical vocabulary of the cardinal virtues ("prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance"), their native language for the virtuous life comes from St. Paul who spoke of "fruits of the Spirit": "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control." In using the Church's language, we learn to live together as a community, to breathe in harmony. We learn to think the Church's thoughts, share its loves, and live by its precepts.

One of the most beautiful words in the Christian lexicon is "hyssop," as in the fifty-first psalm's "purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean." This is a term we only hear when reciting the Psalms. In Christian speech, "hyssop" has overtones of repentance and forgiveness, and calls to mind the beautiful seventeenth verse of the psalm: "A humble and contrite heart God will not despise." Nothing is more characteristic of Christian life than repentance.

Another is the term "patience." About A.D. 200, Tertullian, the first Christian to write in Latin, prepared a little treatise called *de patientia*, "On Patience." Cyprian and Augustine also wrote works with that title. Tertullian observed that patience was not only a divine but a human virtue. The supreme example is Christ's Passion, an observation echoed by Augustine: "The Passion of our Lord is a lesson in patience." For Christians, patience is not only about endurance; it is about a hope grounded in the Resurrection. For Tertullian (himself an impatient man) it is the premier Christian virtue because it signifies a life oriented toward a future that is God's doing. Its distinctive feature is longing—not so much to be released from the ills of the present, but for the good to come. Even love, said Tertullian, cannot be practiced "without the exercise of patience."

"Mercy" is another beloved Christian word taken from the Bible. St. Caesarius of Arles called it *dulce nomen*, "a sweet word." Some years ago, sitting in Christ Church at Oxford during morning prayer, I noticed on the stone floor medallions with the terms *justitia*, *prudentia*, *fortitudo*, and *temperantia*, representing the four cardinal virtues. But then I noticed that there was a fifth. When prayers had ended and I could make my way to the front, I found the fifth was *misericordia*, "mercy." Clearly the designers of the church thought that the cardinal virtues, inherited from the Greek philosophical tradition, were not complete without the addition of a distinctively Christian term. As early as the third century, recognizing the indispensability of the term *misericordia* for thinking about the Christian life, the Christian writer Lactantius chided the Stoic philosophers because they had no place in their moral vocabulary for the affections.

Without the distinctive Christian language there can be no full Christian life, no faithful handing on of the faith to the next generation. For that reason, the words that embody what we believe and practice—words given us by those in whom Christ was present—cannot be frivolously tampered with, translated into another idiom, or discarded. As Augustine taught us centuries ago, the appropriate metaphor for the Church is a city. Language is a defining mark of the Christian *polis*. And, like a city, the Church draws its

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citizens into a shared public life, one marked by its central cultic activity, the Eucharist, and by other rituals, such as Ash Wednesday, Palm Sunday, and Corpus Christi. The Christian society has its own calendar that sets the rhythms of the community's life, offices, institutions, laws, architecture, art, and music, its own customs and mores, history and memory.

One of the most significant features of the transformation of the Roman world in the fourth and fifth centuries was that Christianity occupied and then re-oriented public space. The classical city with its *agora* and temples and theaters gave way to a new city plan with the church located at the center. With this Christianization of space came the sacralization of time as the Church's calendar marked the days for fasting and resting and feasting. In the early middle ages, when kings and their peoples embraced Christianity, conversion was more than adherence to a new set of beliefs. It brought about a change in public practice.

And yet, in modern times—particularly in the last hundred years—the Church has gradually given up this public face, relinquishing the public square to other rituals, other calendars, other architecture, and other languages. There has been an alarming decline in communal rituals and practices. The Church's way of life is being chewed up and spit out by the omnivorous secular society that surrounds us.

A telling example is the rise of the term "culture." We tend to use "culture" not of the Church but of the society in which we live. But the task of handing on the faith is not primarily a question of how "Christ" relates to "culture" but of how the Christian culture is to be sustained and deepened in the face of another culture that is increasingly alien and hostile. The Christ-and-culture paradigm implicitly assumes that the secular culture is the arbiter of meaning. Consequently, a high premium is placed on translation from one idiom to another. Translation, of course, is inevitable in any religious transaction, whether it be telling a story from the Bible to a child, explaining the sacraments to a convert, or preaching the gospel to a people who know nothing of Christianity. If, however, Christianity is a culture in its own right, the Church must insist on its own way of speaking. There must be translation *into* the Lord's style of language, bringing alien language into the orbit of Christian belief and practice and giving it a different meaning. More frequently, however, the task of handing on the faith is understood to mean rendering Christian language into the patois of modernity—even in liturgy, an area where one would expect the uniqueness and idiosyncrasy of the Church's way of speaking to be preserved.

Here, for example, is the prayer for Pentecost XI prior to the reforms of Vatican II: "Look mercifully upon our service, O Lord, I beseech you, that what we offer may be a gift acceptable to you and a support to our frailty" (*nostrae fragilitatis subsidium*). In the new version, it reads: "Look mercifully upon our service, O Lord, we beseech you, that what we offer may be a gift acceptable to you and an increase of our charity" (*nostrae caritatis augmentum*).

The alteration seems innocuous, and the reason given by the compilers reasonable: They wished to render the petition positive rather than negative, thereby making the Latin prayer more dynamic. But the result was the elimination of "frailty," a vivid word found in early liturgical texts and used for centuries. In its place comes "love," obviously a good Christian word, but one that focuses the prayer on the goal while ignoring what stands in the way—our "frailty." An important theological nuance is lost as a common expression replaces the more profound formulation.

Another example is the collect for the first Sunday of Easter: "O God, who unlocked for us the gate of eternity through your only begotten Son who conquered death, grant, we beseech you, that we who celebrate the solemnity of his resurrection may through renewal of the Holy Spirit, rise from the death of the soul" (*a morte animae*). The revised version reads: "through renewal of the Holy Spirit, rise in the light of life" (*in lumine vitae*).

The new version is not simply vacuous, but incoherent. What does it mean to "rise in the light of life"? The faithful are deprived of two precious Christian words, "soul" and "death," both biblical and central to Christian faith. More, the new version ignores a fundamental truth about Easter—for Easter is not only a celebration of Christ's Resurrection, but a time of interior renewal for the Christian, a truth that is expressed metaphorically in the phrase "rise from the death of the soul." The original version plunges the faithful into the deeper caverns of the spiritual life, where they struggle against the forces that hold them in bondage. The revision injects the fatuous language of new-age religion into the Church's worship.

Such changes are deliberate, an attempt to accommodate the words of the liturgy to "the modern mentality" (in the words of one of the revisers). The translators display an embarrassing lack of confidence in what Christians believe and practice. Some texts were judged "shocking for the man of today" and "difficult to understand" and for that reason were "frankly corrected." What we have here is a kind of inculturation in Western modernity. "Liturgy," insists Anscar Chapungco, one of the leading exponents of inculturation, "must not impose on culture a meaning or bearing that

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is intrinsically alien to its nature." What this represents, to borrow a phrase from John Milbank, is a kind of "policing of the sublime."

The unique gift of liturgy, Roman Guardini wrote in his *Spirit of the Liturgy*, is to "create a universe brimming with fruitful spiritual life." Liturgy does not "exist for the sake of humanity, but for the sake of God." If the Bible is the lexicon of Christian speech, then the liturgy is its grammar, a place to come to know and practice the Christian idiom and to be formed by it. For Augustine, the reciting of the Psalms was a way of making the words of the psalmist his own, and he talked about what the words of the Psalms "had done to me."

Paul Griffiths recently observed that one does not have to believe to make use of Christian language and ideas. In the last decades four European philosophers, all atheists, have written major works that draw on Christian thinkers: Terry Eagleton on Thomas Aquinas, Jean-François Lyotard on Augustine's *Confessions*, Alain Badiou on St. Paul, and Slavoj Zizek on Christ's willing acceptance of suffering and death. None of these writers embraces the Church's theological views, but they exhibit a yearning for something more than modernity has to offer—and the only place to turn, finally, is Christianity, with its language, its mode of thinking, and its texts. "This should not surprise Christians," writes Griffiths. "Our intellectual tradition is long-lived, rich, and subtle, and any attempt by European thinkers to do without it is not likely to last."

The Bible and Christian ritual have always been alluring to outsiders. Think for example of Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov's *Great Russian Easter*. Rimsky-Korsakov was not a Christian believer (he was probably a pantheist), but his *Great Russian Easter*, one of his most popular and stirring works, draws deeply on the liturgy and the Scriptures. Subtitled "Overture on Liturgical Themes," it is based on the *Obikhod*, a collection of Russian Orthodox canticles, biblical texts, and hymns. The piece is ablaze with colors and lights as well as brooding darkness, at once awesome, majestic, austere and carnival-like, and it would not be possible without the Orthodox Liturgy.

Rimsky-Korsakov lived in nineteenth-century Russia, but even in our secular society and present music culture, contemporary composers draw inspiration from the Bible. An example is the new work by Jefferson Friedman, a young American composer, that received its world premier by the National Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Leonard Slatkin in the fall of 2004. With the improbable title "The Throne of the Third Heaven of the Nations Millennium General Assembly," the orchestral piece is based on an unusual sculpture in Washington, D.C., created by James Hampton.

The sculpture depicts a throne chair flanked by an altar table, pulpit, offertory tables—in other words, by church appointments. To the left are objects referring to the New Testament, to the right objects referring to the Old Testament. Some are labeled with names from the Bible and Christian history—Adam and Eve, the Virgin Mary, even Pope Pius XII. Drawing on the Book of Revelation, Hampton wished to depict the Second Coming of Christ. In his brief work Friedman tries to conveys not only the aesthetic power of the sculpture but also Hampton's religious vision and a feeling of awe before the throne.

For too long Christianity has relinquished its role as teacher to society. Instead of inspiring the culture, it capitulates to the ethos of the world. The Church must rediscover herself, learn to savor her speech, delight in telling her stories, and confidently pass on what she has received. Only then can she draw people away from the coarse and superficial culture surrounding us into the abundance of life in Christ. "Walk about Zion," sings the psalmist, "go round about her, number her towers, consider well her ramparts, go through her citadels; that you may tell the next generation that this is God, our God for ever and ever."

This is not a new strategy but one that has marked Christianity from the beginning. Origen of Alexandria was the most brilliant Christian apologist during the first three centuries of the Church's history. His most famous work is a debate with Celsus, a Greek philosopher who had lived seventy years earlier. In his book entitled *True Doctrine* Celsus had written: "Greeks are better able to judge the value of what the barbarians [meaning the Christians] have discovered." Celsus believed that the truth of Christianity should be measured "by the criterion of a Greek proof."

Origen, too, had been trained in the Greek intellectual tradition. But he rejected Celsus' assumption that the Church's faith should be measured by an alien standard. The truth of the gospel, Origen insisted, is to be judged by a "proof that is peculiar to itself, and this is more divine than Greek argument." This, said Origen, is what St. Paul was describing when he spoke of a "demonstration of the Spirit and of power."

This is a strategy to be commended in our own time. Let the Church call attention to what is peculiar to herself, not to presumed notions about what is meaningful or intelligible or relevant to contemporary society. A robust Christian witness can only be forged by drawing on the fullness of Christ, as known through the Spirit in the Church. FT

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How Race Wrecked Liberalism

James Nuechterlein

The story of race in modern American history is a melancholy one. There was a brief, intense moment of hope in the early 1960s—a moment which produced the landmark civil-rights bills of 1964 and 1965—that the nation might somehow transcend its terrible racial past and enter on a new era of justice and comity. But the moment quickly burnt itself out in a series of renewed antagonisms and mutual incomprehensions between blacks and whites that seem today, if not nearly as incendiary as at their worst, still not likely of resolution. Liberals insist that not enough was done to seize the moment, conservatives suspect that much that went wrong had to do with erroneous diagnoses and exaggerated expectations, and hardly anyone has plausible suggestions for what we might do now to set things right.

Nick Kotz's *Judgment Days: Lyndon Baines Johnson, Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Laws that Changed America* reflects, in the end, the same mood of sorrowful regret that marks most accounts of the period. Americans are accustomed to think of their nation's history as a success story, but the tale of the civil-rights movement—despite, as Kotz correctly reminds us, all that its supporters accomplished—cannot persuasively be told that way.

Kotz's tale is not just a sad one; it is also one that has been told many times before. Indeed, no episode in recent American history has been more thoroughly studied than the civil-rights movement of the 1960s. Memoirs, biographies, and monographs have created a profuse and detailed literature that makes it difficult for new books to avoid redundancy. Kotz does not entirely solve the problem—much of his narrative will be familiar to informed readers—but, for the most part, he handles it admirably. He displays a clear command of secondary sources and uses a variety of primary accounts (especially his own extensive personal interviews and President Johnson's voluminous telephone tapes) to provide immediacy and authenticity to his telling of an oft-told tale.

Most of all, he offers readers a fresh and instructive angle of vision. Martin Luther King Jr. and Lyndon Johnson were the two central figures of the civil-rights struggle in the 1960s. But while they on occasion worked effectively together, theirs was always a tangled, mutually suspicious alliance—and one that finally fell hopelessly apart. That did not cause the collapse of the civil-rights movement, but it effectively symbolized it. Kotz's account leaves the reader with the sense that the disintegration of Johnson and King's alliance was at once unfortunate and unavoidable. So also, perhaps, with the disintegration of the civil-rights coalition.

JUDGMENT DAYS: LYNDON BAINES JOHNSON, MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR., AND THE LAWS THAT CHANGED AMERICA

By Nick Kotz
Houghton Mifflin
522 pp. $26.

But there is still more to learn here—more than Kotz intends, and more, almost certainly, than he would agree with. It is commonly (if often only tacitly) conceded that liberalism went wrong in the 1960s, as measured by the fact that liberals, who once gloried in the label, have been reluctant to speak its name ever since. There are a number of reasons for modern liberalism's decline, but major among them was loss of confidence in the assumption that had powered it from its origins in Populism through the New Deal and beyond: faith

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in the power of the federal government to solve the problems of American society.

After the perceived failure of Lyndon Johnson's Great Society—an extraordinarily ambitious program of reform that was at least as confident in the affirmative power of government as was the New Deal—that faith has never fully been restored. And the failure of civil-rights legislation to deliver on its promise of solving the problem of racial conflict in America lies very near the heart of the Great Society's undoing.

In historiographical terms, *Judgment Days* can be categorized as moderately revisionist. The treatment of King is more conventional than Kotz allows (he unconvincingly claims that previous authors have not adequately recognized King's political skills, moderating influence within the civil-rights movement, and developing radicalism). But the book does give a more generous view of Johnson than is customary.

Conservatives disdain Johnson because of the extravagances of the Great Society, while liberals hold him in contempt because his policy in Vietnam reduced America to moral ruin and brought discredit on liberalism. Kotz agrees that Johnson was terribly wrong on Vietnam, but he suggests that liberals, in their preoccupation with the presumed follies of the war, have failed to do justice to Johnson's domestic accomplishments, especially with regard to civil rights. He did not simply, as is often suggested, ride the national emotion over John Kennedy's assassination to easy victories on a reform agenda. He won them, Kotz reminds us, through the immense legislative skills he had demonstrated and perfected in his career as majority leader of the Senate. He had, to be sure, a promising opportunity, but he made the very most of it, as Kotz's skillful narrative demonstrates. He was perhaps as brilliant a leader of Congress as any president in our history.

More than that, he accomplished his victories in civil rights knowing full well that he was risking grave political damage to himself and his party. In the common telling of the story, the civil-rights bills of 1964 and 1965—the first ending segregation in public accommodations, the second guaranteeing voting rights for blacks—cost Johnson and the Democrats their control of the South and quite likely, over the long run, their national majority as well. That part of the story is more complicated than is normally supposed, but the conventional wisdom cannot simply be dismissed.

So we have, in Kotz's telling, not just one hero of the civil-rights enterprise but two. Martin Luther King of course was the great prophet of racial liberation, but Lyndon Johnson was his essential political partner. As if to provide dramatic balance, Kotz introduces a villain, as well: J. Edgar Hoover. That's obvious enough at one level. As head of the FBI, Hoover set out with near-obsessive intensity to destroy King as a civil-rights leader. He fed Johnson—as he had John and Robert Kennedy before him—an endless stream of memos detailing King's marital infidelities and Communist connections. (Kotz raises questions—largely unpersuasive in my view—about the accuracy of the Communism charge, especially concerning the role of Stanley Levison, one of King's most influential advisors. Nonetheless, he is correct to note there is no evidence that Communist thought played any significant role in the shaping of the mainstream civil-rights movement.)

Hoover also circulated his information—gathered through various secret surveillance devices—to other political figures and the media as well, hoping the publicity would ruin King's reputation. (It is encouraging that so few politicians or members of the press publicized the material.) The FBI even went so far as to send King a composite tape of his sexual activities accompanied by an anonymous letter suggesting that the only alternative for him to public disgrace was suicide. Such episodes in sexual blackmail were apparently not restricted to King. Kotz notes the remarkable irony that the FBI used similar tactics against the Ku Klux Klan. "In terms of violating civil liberties," he concludes, "the FBI's war against the Klan was just as ruthless as its campaigns against targeted civil-rights activists."

But Kotz's disdain for Hoover distorts his analysis. The issue here is not Hoover's villainy—which is obvious enough—but where it came from and, far more significantly, the role it played in King and Johnson's ultimate estrangement. Kotz argues that Hoover's antagonism to King was "fueled by racism," but he offers little evidence to sustain the charge. Hoover's racial views were hardly models of enlightenment, but it seems more plausible to ascribe his intense antipathy to King to his lifelong antiradicalism (he really thought, however questionably, that King had been taken in by Communists) and to his sexual puritanism (he was genuinely appalled that a Christian minister—and a public moral hero—should be so morally casual in his private behavior).

That aside, Kotz's repeated references to Hoover as the "Iago" of the Johnson-King relationship overstates the FBI chief's influence. It was not, finally, the "poison" of the information Hoover sent Johnson that turned the president against the preacher. (In view of Johnson's own predilections, it is especially unlikely that he would have been scandalized by the sexual tidbits.) It is no doubt true that mounting opposition to his policies fed Johnson's incipient paranoia about sinister forces arrayed against him—especially the Com-

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munists (or, as Kotz wryly adds, "anyone associated with the Kennedy family"). Hoover fed on that paranoia, but had he never sent Johnson a single memo undermining King, the falling out between the two leaders would still likely have occurred.

Consider the nature of their association. At its best, as Kotz notes, it was marked by a "passion for equality and a dedication to improving the lives of those left out of America's affluent society." Both looked to an activist federal government as an essential instrument in advancing the lot of minorities and the poor. They also shared a deep affection for the South, even as they both understood that their home region required a social revolution.

Beyond these agreements, however, there were fundamental differences. They were never personally close. As Kotz notes, both were men of massive egos and deep insecurities, each wary of the other and reluctant to share political or personal glory. King resisted Johnson's typically overbearing attempts at bonhomie; Johnson was frustrated by King's determination to maintain a cool distance.

More important, though still not at the heart of things, were disagreements on strategy and tactics. Particularly at issue was the question of how much of the war for racial equality would be fought out on the streets and in exercises in civil disobedience. King understood that success for the civil-rights cause depended heavily on the demonstrations that kept the issue in the public consciousness. He believed in and practiced nonviolence, but he recognized that his cause advanced most significantly when dramatic confrontations heightened the moral contrast between peaceful protesters and violent segregationists. Redneck sheriffs and KKK mobs served the movement's purposes, and King and his allies in the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) knew that bringing out the worst in their enemies created the kind of morality plays—widely covered by the media—that aroused consciences and caught politicians' attention. It was agonizing to involve children in potentially violent marches, but King, as Kotz notes, was capable when necessary of tactical ruthlessness.

King was also caught up in tensions within the civil-rights movement. The spectrum of militancy in the movement ranged from the relative conservatism of such established organizations as the NAACP and the Urban League to the impatient radicalism of such groups as CORE and SNCC. King's SCLC, roughly in the middle, drew suspicion from both sides, but King was increasingly sensitive to charges from his left that he had achieved recognition as the nation's most prominent black leader by moderating his demands and tactics to meet the rules set by the white liberal establishment.

Johnson, a politician to the bone, understood all this, at least at one level. He knew that King had to be seen to be his own man; he knew, more particularly, that King could not give up public demonstrations. But the president faced pressures of his own. There was, first of all, the danger that the demonstrations and the reactions to them could spiral into public chaos. A primary duty of government, after all, is to preserve order, and a government incapable of doing so is a government risking illegitimacy. That essential point has not properly been taken into account in many versions of the story of what went wrong with liberalism in the 1960s.

Johnson faced more particular problems as well. King and other civil-rights activists hoped that violent responses to their demonstrations would force the federal government to provide the protection for peaceful protesters that local governments could not or would not supply. Johnson was willing to push the FBI to offer behind-the-scenes protection where necessary, but he hesitated to mount any major federal show of force. He did not want to confirm conservative southern images of civil-rights protest as a Second Reconstruction, a reenactment of the post–Civil War era in which (however briefly and ineffectually) the North was seen to force racial equality on a defenseless South.

Johnson's political situation was delicate. He had come to the presidency by terrible accident and was burdened with the label of "Southerner." No one from deep in the South had held the presidency since before the Civil War. As Kotz indicates, Johnson knew that to govern effectively—and to win the 1964 nomination on his own—he would have to gain the confidence of the liberal northern wing of the Democratic Party.

That meant breaking with the South. Johnson and other Southerners with national ambitions had known this for some time. It is noteworthy that as far back as 1956 the only three southern senators who refused to sign the Southern Manifesto pledging resistance to the Supreme Court's 1954 desegregation ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education* were those—Estes Kefauver, Albert Gore Sr., and Johnson himself—who had eyes on the presidency.

The other, more familiar side of the story is that Johnson and his party risked their hold on both the White House and Congress by supporting the biracial northern forces pushing for civil rights in the South. The president famously remarked to his aide Bill Moyers after signing the 1964 Civil Rights Act, "I think we just delivered the South to the Republican Party for a long time to come." And, of course, that turned out to be true over the long run.

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Again, though, the story is more complicated than is often supposed. The issue of race both began and ended the Democratic ascendancy in the South. The South lost the Civil War, but it did not thereby lose its dedication to white supremacy. The era of Reconstruction taught whites that their only hope of maintaining that supremacy was maintaining racial unity in support of the Democratic Party. To vote Republican was to divide and so betray the white South.

Over time, the tribal allegiance to the Democrats gave to southern politics an increasingly unnatural air. The South was always the most culturally conservative region in the nation, and, especially with the rise of the New Deal, that made its monolithic Democratic attachment among whites a jarring anomaly. Thus emerged the so-called "unholy alliance" in Congress between northern Republicans and conservative southern Democrats in opposition to New Deal initiatives on a wide variety of issues, an alliance that continued into the 1960s. The 1964 Civil Rights Act—which substantial majorities of Republicans in the House and Senate supported (though the party's presidential candidate, Barry Goldwater, did not)—ended the era of white supremacy in the South and the rationale for the region's unity in the Democratic Party.

The South was thereby liberated, against its will, from the iron bond of race and freed, for the first time since the Civil War, to develop something like a normal politics, a politics where it was no longer unthinkable for whites to change party allegiance. Racial issues, of course, continued to be part of that politics, but they did not, as before, overwhelm it. The move into the Republican Party was made possible by racial politics, but, once begun, it had many other sources to perpetuate it.

The South's turn to the GOP after the civil-rights revolution has, in retrospect, the appearance of inevitability. It did not necessarily seem so at the time. Johnson and other Democrats had their worries about the matter—which is why they urged that the necessary changes in southern life be carried out with due attention to white sensibilities—but they also had hopes that a new Democratic coalition might be assembled. Both Johnson and King thought moderate whites and blacks—the latter massively increased in number after the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965—could come together to keep Democrats competitive in the region. And indeed, skillful Democratic moderates, as recently as Bill Clinton, have demonstrated that the South need not be written off by Democrats as a politically lost cause.

In any case, it was not differences over how to conduct the struggle for civil rights that finally drove King and Johnson apart. Those differences took their toll, but they were not determinative. Something much larger was developing behind and beyond them, an emerging ideological conflict that finally divided not just these two men but the entire American Left.

That conflict was most visible, of course, in the contentions over Vietnam. Kotz's *Judgment Days* is about civil rights, not the war, but he recognizes that the story of the Johnson-King relationship—especially their final falling out—cannot be told without reference to Vietnam. Johnson did not doubt the rightness of the war effort, but he was never optimistic about its success. From the beginning of his presidency he privately worried that Vietnam was indeed the quagmire its opponents declared it to be. He did not know how to win or to achieve an honorable negotiated peace, and he did not know how to get out without destroying the nation's credibility and his own presidency.

King had always thought the war misguided in itself and a drain on resources he wanted directed to antipoverty and racial-justice programs in America. For some time, however, he withheld or muted his criticism. He hesitated to break with the president, and, in any case, his advisers warned that he should not risk losing support for civil rights by opposing a war that most Americans still approved.

By 1967, though, King had become determined to speak out. The war was going badly and people on the Left increasingly identified opposition to Vietnam and support for civil rights as a common cause. As Johnson's popularity declined, so did the costs of opposing him. Kotz emphasizes, however, that King's dramatic antiwar address on April 4 at Riverside Church in New York was based on morality, not political calculation. He was appalled at a war that was, in his view, "destroying the moral fabric" of the nation and placing the United States "on the wrong side of the world revolution."

Johnson took King's attack as a declaration of war and responded in kind. Not unreasonably, he felt that his leadership on civil-rights legislation had been insufficiently appreciated by the black community in general and King in particular. The relation between Johnson and King was weakened in 1966 when the SCLC publicly criticized the administration for escalation in Vietnam and "inadequate enforcement" of the civil-rights bills. And King's scathing attack on the war in 1967 broke that relation entirely. Johnson's attachment to the cause of civil rights was such that he continued to press—against the advice of his key associates—for new legislation, but he was done with King. As Kotz notes, he not only encouraged Hoover to circulate the FBI's attacks on King, he pushed his aides in the White House to join in the effort.

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King's highly emotive antiwar rhetoric was part of a growing radicalizing of his politics in general. That radicalism, it seems, came from mutually reinforcing sources of frustration and political naïveté. It was nearly inevitable that passage of the civil-rights bills would be followed by a letdown. Gaining access to public facilities and the ballot box did not significantly change the day-to-day lives of most southern blacks. King and his followers may have known at one level that this would be the case, but the "We Shall Overcome" spirit of the movement, necessary to its success, had generated expectations impossible of quick fulfillment. There was also the problem for King of what to do next, how to keep alive the movement and his leadership in it. He did the obvious thing: He headed north, and there the frustrations were compounded.

King's Chicago venture of 1966 was an inglorious failure. The difficulties of blacks there did not originate, as in the South, with the absence of legal protection. As Kotz notes, laws against discrimination in housing and employment were already in place (however indifferently enforced), and blacks voted in large numbers. Moreover, Mayor Richard J. Daley was, in Kotz's words, "a card-carrying liberal Democrat" who had instructed the congressmen in the Chicago machine to vote in favor of civil-rights and antipoverty legislation. There was racism aplenty in Daley's Chicago, but the links between it and negative conditions in the black community were not so obvious as was widely assumed. King sought immediate improvements in jobs, housing, and education, but the cultural legacy of discrimination was such that those improvements would not easily occur, even supposing an improbable utopian turn in race relations. The marches King mounted in the city had, in the end, not much point to them other than the general plea that, somehow, attention must be paid.

King got nothing out of the Chicago project but, as Kotz puts it, "a toothless set of pledges" from the city that efforts would be made to make things better. The Chicago failure, by all accounts, pushed King sharply left. As Kotz says, "King now indicted the government and American society with a fierce new rhetoric." Pragmatic liberal reform did not go deep enough. America's problems were "systemic" (a term that became pervasive on the Left). "Something is wrong with the economic system of our country," King said to his advisors. "Something is wrong with capitalism." Kotz concludes, as have others before him, that King had decided some form of socialism was necessary to set things right. Aware that advocacy of socialism was political suicide, King talked instead of guaranteed jobs and incomes and of a vast Marshall plan for the nation's cities.

For King and countless others in the 1960s, civil rights and Vietnam came together in a negative synergy to edge their politics from liberalism to radicalism—the sum of the two protests greater than its considerable parts. Radicalism was not unfamiliar to the American left; the 1930s, for example, had been awash in visions of the fundamental transformation of economic and social relations. What distinguished the 1960s from previous manifestations of leftist protest (aside from its dubious celebration of the superior wisdom of youth) was the direction of that protest.

From Populism through Progressivism, down to the New Deal and beyond, reformers had focused on targets on the Right: the railroad barons, Wall Street, the trusts, big business in general. But now the enemy was the liberal establishment itself, in particular a presumably liberal Democratic administration that could not or would not provide an acceptable level of racial justice and that was conducting a monstrously immoral war in Indochina. It was this unprecedented internecine war on the Left that accounts for so much of the febrile and hysterical nature of the politics of the 1960s.

King was no hysteric, but he was a Christian preacher involved in intense political action. Inevitably he brought to his political rhetoric the moral passion that is natural to the pulpit. Much of the success the civil-rights movement had attained depended, of course, on the power of King's rhetoric to stir black souls and unsettle white consciences. King was unequaled in his ability to present the movement for racial equality as, at its heart, a simple requirement of moral decency. The moral clarity of the issue gave it a religious dimension unprecedented in American politics since the Civil War. Kotz rightly emphasizes the extraordinary influence of the "armies of God" at every level of the civil-rights revolution.

The moral passion that King and other people of religious conviction brought to civil rights carried over to their opposition to the war. That issue, too, seemed to them morally unambiguous. The two issues together bid up considerably the moral intensity of politics. A politics of moral certainty is not a politics open to compromise. As activists solidified their certainties, they widened the ideological gap between themselves and most ordinary Americans, who had their own uneasiness about Vietnam but who were not inclined to define the war—much less, politics as a whole—in terms of moral certitude.

The estrangement between Johnson and King was characteristic of an estrangement between liberals and radicals that occurred everywhere on the Left as the 1960s wore on. To put the matter simply, liberals were

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people who could still, however uneasily, say "Yes" to the American reality; radicals were those who had come with varying degrees of reluctance to say "No." Most Americans found that "No" incomprehensible, and they turned against the Left in general as they saw so many erstwhile liberals flirt with, or succumb to, radical criticism.

The loss of confidence among liberals—"we have failed" became a common mantra—led to conservative political gains. As the liberal establishment moved left under radical pressure, conservatives gained purchase on the political center. It was Vietnam that most moved liberalism left, but for the majority of Americans it was the racial issue, not the war, that turned them, however uncertainly, in the opposite direction.

Judgment Days offers a mostly conventional liberal reading of the increasing deadlock on civil rights. Kotz recognizes that proponents of change held often unrealistic hopes for how easily and quickly improvements would come in the black community, but he blames the reformers' frustration at the rate of change mainly on white recalcitrance. He notes disapprovingly that as Congress balked at passing new civil-rights legislation or at spending as much as the president wanted on his War on Poverty, "from the public came only indifference, or a sense that black Americans and their white liberal allies, including Lyndon Johnson, were pushing too hard."

That reading of the situation cannot be dismissed. Racial prejudice, insufficient moral concern, and social lethargy were widespread among whites and help explain why an era of racial reform that began so promisingly with the March on Washington in 1963 ended so disastrously in assassinations, riots, and bitter recriminations some five years later. But the reading is also seriously incomplete.

There is evidence that in the aftermath of the March on Washington the majority of northern whites held mostly benign views toward the idea of racial justice for blacks. Few of them could quarrel with the moral logic of King's "I Have a Dream" speech, and for many the guilt he rightly inspired about America's racial history inclined them to agree, with conservative Republican Senate leader Everett Dirksen, that civil rights was "an idea whose time had come." It is hard otherwise to explain the wide margins by which the civil-rights bills of 1964 and 1965 passed in the face of united southern opposition. Public opinion polls of the time further bear out that interpretation: Congress was acting in accordance with, not contrary to, majority views.

Why then did those benign views shift, if not to opposition, at least to serious reservation? The standard interpretation is that King's move north brought the issue home in a negative way to whites in Chicago and elsewhere who could without cost support black equality in distant Dixie but who developed second thoughts when civil rights entered their backyard.

But that is far from all that was happening. Moderate whites who supported civil-rights legislation thought that in doing so they were doing the right thing. They also thought they were helping to secure social peace. They paid due attention to the activist slogan, "no justice, no peace," and assumed that the civil-rights bills of 1964 and 1965 would be taken as the justice that assured peace. Moderates reacted less sympathetically to repeated street demonstrations in Chicago—demonstrations that often provoked violence from white mobs—than to those in Birmingham or Selma. Blacks in the South excluded from the political process had no place to take their politics other than to the streets, but that was not the case in the North. Marches in the South took the form of morality plays pitting good against evil. Those in the North, however justifiable in political terms, lacked the same transparent moral clarity.

Infinitely more troubling to political moderates were the violent racial protests in the North that began in 1964 and continued, in escalating severity, every summer for several years. Within two weeks of passage of the civil-rights legislation of 1964 a major riot broke out in Harlem, followed quickly by outbreaks in other northeastern cities. Just five days after passage of the Voting Rights Act in 1965 came the conflagration in Watts, one of the deadliest race riots in the nation's history.

It would be difficult to overestimate the damage that those and subsequent riots did to the cause of civil rights. White guilt dissipated; white outrage flourished. Moderates had assumed that in supporting civil-rights legislation they were both doing the right thing and purchasing social order. When that implicit bargain broke down, they felt betrayed, and they became increasingly dubious about arguments that only further legislation would make possible a break in an endless series of "long, hot summers."

The reaction to the riots on the Left further unsettled moderate whites. King, not surprisingly, blamed specific outbreaks mostly on official misbehavior—often police brutality—and put increasing emphasis on the economic roots of black protest. He called the Watts riot a "class revolt" of the underprivileged. Many white liberals, while insisting that they did not condone black violence, so emphasized the importance of understanding the frustrations leading to its occurrence that they seemed to be justifying it.

The official establishment response to the riots, the Kerner Commission Report of 1968, carried that form

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of analysis a step further. It concluded that the most fundamental cause of the riots was "white racism" and warned that only massive government spending could remedy the "economic and social decay" of the urban ghettoes that was turning America into two separate and unequal nations.

Liberals hailed the report as prophetic, but most Americans found it thoroughly unpersuasive. It was one thing to identify white racial attitudes as the most important source for the long-term disabilities of the black community. It was another to tie those attitudes directly to the often nihilistic violence of Watts, Detroit, Newark and elsewhere—that explanation stretched the causal link to the breaking point. In any case, most Americans resisted any implication that the nation was so morally corrupt that it deserved to be torn apart.

The riots—and the liberal response to them—undermined majority support for civil rights and prompted a broad rethinking of the causes and cures of black inequality. The conventional liberal wisdom, exemplified in the Kerner report, assumed that the essential problem was a system of racial prejudice so deeply embedded in the habits and structures of society as to make overall black progress impossible. The solution was a revolution in white thought accompanied by comprehensive antidiscrimination legislation and lavish public spending to improve conditions and stimulate economic development in black neighborhoods.

Such forms of analysis assumed that, for the most part, black progress was a gift solely in the hands of white society either to withhold or to bestow. Thus, Kotz describes King's bitterness over his northern misadventures: "Chicago convinced King that white America, North as well as South, was not ready to share the goods of an affluent society—the jobs, the nice neighborhoods." Most Americans thought the matter of social success or failure, even for minorities, a more complicated matter. Nice neighborhoods did not grow by social fiat. Kotz himself, who by and large accepts the liberal analysis, concedes it underestimated the black community's cultural conditions that made it difficult, especially for those at the bottom, to take advantage of opportunities that were now available.

The manifold complexities of all this aside, a curious dynamic was at work eroding support not just for civil rights and antipoverty legislation but for Lyndon Johnson's whole Great Society program. Faith in the efficacy of government to solve social problems depended sooner or later on evidence of success. Johnson's ambitions were nothing short of grandiose: he intended, as he put it, to "out-Roosevelt Roosevelt and out-Lincoln Lincoln." The Great Society included reforms in medical care, education, the environment, immigration, foreign aid, defense, support of arts and humanities—nearly every realm the reform imagination could contemplate.

Most of all, though, it focused on blacks and the poor. Lack of success with these overlapping groups would bring into question the Great Society's fundamental assumptions. Conservatives, whose numbers, on this question at least, increased exponentially from the early to the late 1960s, pointed to riots, the rise of black power, and wholesale discontent in the minority community to discredit liberal programs. The Left, whose expectations and demands had grown at rates that no scheme of reform could possibly meet, was equally dismissive. (It devastated Johnson that the Kerner Commission refused to acknowledge the improvements in civil rights and social justice that, with a considerable degree of justification, he felt ought to be credited to his account.)

Right and Left agreed that the Great Society had failed, though they disagreed fundamentally as to the sources of its failure. Where conservatives saw excessive confidence in what government had it in its power to accomplish, radicals—and radicalized liberals—saw insufficient willingness to question existing structures and assumptions of the social order. As things turned out, the critique from the Left dissipated rather quickly. Most liberals, instructed by the election of Richard Nixon in 1968, gave up their flirtation with radicalism and regained a measure of political sobriety. The McGovern debacle four years later persuaded the holdouts.

What remained in the political atmosphere was a skepticism about activist government so pervasive that, almost forty years later, it is still ideologically dominant. And what most fueled that skepticism was the perceived failure in the interrelated areas of civil rights and poverty. Race did not wreck Lyndon Johnson's presidency—the hopeless mess in Vietnam did that—but race, more than anything else, wrecked his dreams of reconstituting New Deal liberalism as the animating center of American politics.

It is, in historical perspective, entirely understandable that civil rights is what sent Lyndon Johnson's political dreams up in smoke. Race is the one issue that Americans have never even come close to getting right. It is our original sin and our abiding conundrum. It continues to divide the nation black and white, liberal and conservative, as post-1960s debates over mandatory integration, diversity, and racial preferences remind us. Given all this, it is ironic but unsurprising that, in trying to achieve racial progress, Lyndon Johnson not only came up short but did enduring damage to the liberalism in whose name he put the issue forward. FT

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Sundial in the Rain

Patiently waiting for the sun to rise,
the dial seems more dutiful than wise:
the sun, already up for hours, seems
a shrouded moon, so muted are its beams.
Mist complicates to drizzle, then to drops.
Like one of Thomas Hardy's dismal props,
demure atop its neo-gothic column,
the timepieces tenders us that old, unsolemn
advisory: it counts only sunny hours.
If one subtracts for night, for clouds, for showers,
that hardly makes a taxing regimen.
Always willing to work, of course, but when
is not for it or us to specify,
much as we might prefer to clear the sky.

The gnomon, less a pointer than a nose
of stiff wrought iron, juts aloft and shows
there isn't anything to do but wait,
unless to smell dank earth and meditate
on times we're just as willing not to mark.
Could we surrender to the larger dark
the shadows that our memories renew,
it would be no great trick to share the view
that keeps the dial jovially on track.
It never forfeits time in looking back,
endures inertia while the meddling storm
denies it freedom to project its form,
and holding its potential in good stead
resumes its reach as quick as light is shed.

Robert B. Shaw

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Books in Review

Nor Certitude, Nor Peace

Saturday
By Ian McEwan
Doubleday, 304 pp., $26.

Reviewed by Paul J. Griffiths

Ian McEwan's *Saturday* is his eighth novel, and perhaps his finest. It tells the story of a single Saturday, in early 2003, in the life of Henry Perowne, a prosperous and successful London neurosurgeon approaching fifty. Perowne is married to a beautiful and intelligent lawyer, Rosalind. They live in an elegant house in an expensive London square. Their cars, their furnishings, their tastes, and their work are all just as they should be, objects of delight.

This is true, as well, of their two grown children: the daughter, Daisy, is about to have her first book of poetry published; the son, Theo, is an accomplished blues musician. Henry and Rosalind's principal delights are their children—and their work, without which, it seems to Henry, they would be nothing. They behave, the two of them, as though work were the very stuff of life: Their handheld electronic calendars mate, weekly, by infra-red beam in order to keep their eleven- or twelve-hour workdays coordinated, and they wield, with the pleasure of skilled mastery, the scalpels and legal briefs that are the tools of their trade. They are masters of the beautiful universe of things, rejoicing in their mastery and in that beauty; their children, poets and musicians freed by prosperity from the need to control, sing of the beauty their parents have mastered.

The prose of *Saturday* is understated, clear, and intense, an almost perfect instrument for depicting the deep and subtle beauties of the material world with such clarity that they seem immediately present. McEwan has always been good at this, and here he is better than good: music heard, flesh touched, wine tasted, food eaten, words exchanged, colors seen, sexual love taken and given, familial ties celebrated and mourned—all presented with loving accuracy as delightful but fragile goods constantly under threat by the forces of chaos and dissolution.

McEwan's prosperous and hard-working characters have shaped an ordered and beautiful universe with their intelligence and skill, but they and that universe are, half-knowingly, suspended over an abyss which their gifts and efforts cannot control. This is a standard McEwan theme, often evident in macabre and horrifying ways in earlier novels such as *The Comfort of Strangers* (1981) and

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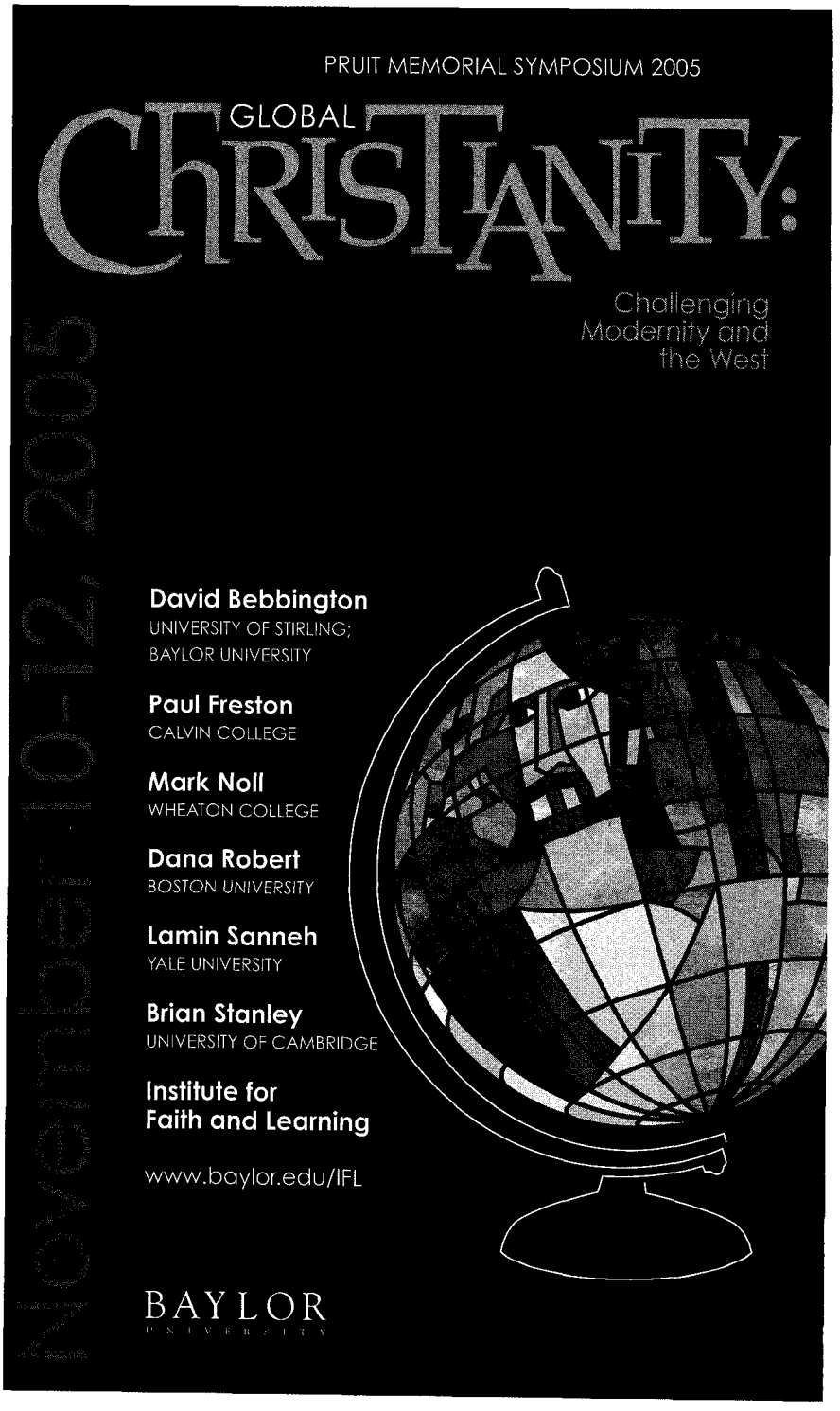
Black Dogs (1992). In *Saturday*, there is nothing macabre, no *grand guignol*. But there is threat and menace, all the more effective because it is understated and depicted in an utterly realistic setting. The novel's beauty is matched by its horror: It is a book about "the awareness of the abyss," a phrase that recurs several times in the novel.

THE PEROWNES' garden of earthly delights is indeed beautiful, and they know it. But the worm is in the bud. The novel's Saturday is a real one, shortly before the opening of hostilities in Iraq in the spring of 2003, and a march of protest in London against that war provides a darkly threatening frame for the events of the day. In the novel's opening scene, Henry wakes early, looks out of his window and sees a burning airplane weaving its way through the sky toward Heathrow, a vision that brings with it post-9/11 images of unpredictable and uncontrollable violent death. The airplane turns out to be not an al-Quaeda weapon aimed at London's heart but only a cargo plane suffering from engine failure; it lands without casualties. But Henry does not immediately know this, and the book's tone is set: The earthly paradise of the Perownes is subject to forces it does not understand and cannot control, and while its inhabitants may prefer to forget this, they will sometimes be forced to face it.

Violence soon moves inward, from the book's margins into the center of the picture. On his way to his usual Saturday morning squash game, Henry has a minor car accident that leads to a threatening confrontation with the driver of the other car, a man named Baxter. Violence is offered, but Henry deflects it by quick intelligence, perceiving that Baxter is suffering from Huntington's Disease, a degenerative malady of the brain with clear behavioral symptoms. The immediate threat is deflected and defused by Henry's understanding of Baxter's condition: He offers a quick diagnosis and half-promises the possibility of treatment. Baxter is almost seduced. But then Henry goes too far, humiliating Baxter in front of his friends.

This prepares the pivotal scene of the book, in which the Perowne paradise, the house beautiful in which everything is ordered, is invaded by Baxter, the agent of chaos seeking revenge. The assembled Perowne family, preparing for a celebratory dinner (its ingredients and the accompanying wine are all lovingly described), is faced by chaos, just as London, civilization's heart, was



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faced by a burning airplane in the book's opening scene, and just as Henry, the brain surgeon, had earlier faced down Baxter, his brain-sick assailant. The abyss is now open and yawning, and the reader is prepared for the very worst, the dissolution of order into blood and death.

IN THE BOOK's pivotal scene, Baxter, armed and in control, orders Daisy, Henry's daughter, to strip naked. Sexual violence threatens. But Baxter has also noticed the proof-copy of Daisy's book of poems, and he asks her to read from it. Naked and terrified, she at first cannot compose herself sufficiently to do so, but then she begins to read—or at least to pretend to read. In fact, she recites, from memory, Matthew Arnold's "Dover Beach" while pretending that it is written on the pages of her own book. The reader at first hears this poem through Henry's ears, and since he does not know the poem, there is no explicit signal that the poem is not Daisy's but Arnold's.

Baxter, moved, asks her to read it again, and so she recites it again, in a stronger voice: "The sea is calm tonight. The tide is full, the moon lies fair upon the straits." Baxter is transformed and exalted. Thoughts of rape vanish. "You wrote that," he says, "It's beautiful. You know that, don't you. It's beautiful. And you wrote it. . . . It makes me think about where I grew up." All Baxter wants after hearing the poem is to possess the book in which he thinks it is written and to grasp at Henry's offer of treatment. He's no longer interested in revenge or violence.

This scene is not the end of the house invasion or of the book, which aims at a complex denouement. But the scene does contain the concentrated essence of the book, and it is full of art. First, there is seduction and transformation by beauty. McEwan is horribly explicit in his description of the long-term prospects of those suffering from Huntington's, and he is careful to depict Baxter as a man who knows exactly what is in store for him. Baxter, a sociopath whose brain has begun its irreversible decay, is temporarily transformed, remade, exalted, and inspired by the beauty of Arnold's poetry on the lips of a naked woman under threat of rape. Beauty, in McEwan's view, does have the power to make people remember who and what they are and to act accordingly. Beauty may be poetic or musical or gastronomic or sexual: All are lovingly depicted in *Saturday*.

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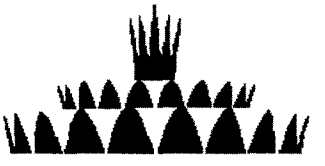
But whatever its mode, response to it is proper to us, woven into the fabric of our being, and McEwan's depiction of Baxter's transfiguration by Arnold can be read as an extended and dramatic refutation of W.H. Auden's dictum that poetry makes nothing happen.

There is also the question of memory and tradition. Daisy has been trained by her poet-grandfather to memorize English poetry: swaths of Shakespeare, tracts of Traherne, acres of Arnold. She has been textualized, inscribed with the high literary culture of England. This is what permits her to speak with Arnold's voice, to allow Arnold to speak through her. She finds it easier, in extremis, to speak the words of others than her own, and it is the words of others, of a tradition, that transform. McEwan says something important here about memory. Baxter is an intelligent man (and, of course, an Englishman) but one without roots or memory. He floats upon the violent surface of a turbulent sea with no idea of the depths it contains, and McEwan perhaps suggests that it is not only beauty but local beauty, particular beauty, the beauty of a tradition, that transforms. Daisy is an English poet speaking the English tradition to an Englishman, and Baxter is brought by her words not only to an acknowledgment of beauty as such, but also, recall, to a memory of where he came from: "It makes me think about where I grew up." McEwan, in fashioning this scene, is also an Englishman representing England, extending its literary tradition.

The poem that has averted violence is an elegiac lament for loss, and above all for the loss of faith. By choosing this poem, McEwan is intimating that beauty is all we can hope for. God is unavailable. Arnold's ignorant armies clashing by night are present everywhere in the margins of *Saturday* (the protesters in London's streets, the American and English armies massing for invasion, the Baathist legions digging in around Baghdad, the mysteriously threatening presence of al Quaeda, the brain-sick and drug-addicted of London's streets), and the chaos-waters that threaten to engulf the Perowne family cannot be stemmed by a divine *fiat lux*.

McEwan goes to a good deal of trouble to emphasize that the Perownes are godless people, Henry because he has become convinced that there can be no God in such a troubled and violent world, and his children because God has never occurred to them—they are secular by default, and in this they serve as synecdoche for England in 2003. Himself an atheist, McEwan chooses this poem with care, then, to show without telling what we have and what we do not have. What we have and can use is beauty. What we do not have and cannot use is God. Beauty cannot save us: The ignorant armies will not go away, Baxter's brain will wither and give him a horrible death, the burning planes will drop from the skies and kill the innocent, women will be raped, children will be killed. But, at the same time, poetry will be written, music played, love exchanged, and the dramatic and precise skills of the neurosurgeon exercised for good. And sometimes, just sometimes, the suffocating fabric of violence will be shot through with threads of beauty sufficient to transform it into a cloak of light.

But the reader, while admiring McEwan's skill and being absorbed by his story, is finally left melancholy and even anguished. The novel ends as Perowne is falling asleep with his wife: "He fits himself around her, her silk pajamas, her scent, her warmth, her beloved form, and draws closer to her. Blindly, he kisses her nape. There's always this, is one of his



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remaining thoughts. And then: there's only this."

But there isn't only this and there isn't always this. The beauty of the beloved and of the love that makes her the beloved is real and true and important. But those beauties are what they are because they participate in and resonate with God, something vastly greater than they, something that promises what in Perowne's (and McEwan's) universe must necessarily be absent: a final victory over the ignorant armies, and a dawn in which their night is suffused with light. It is a tragedy for those with skill and taste and energy and wit and sensibility in our time that, increasingly, this vision—this truth—seems unavailable to them. McEwan is perfectly aware of this. His book is an almost-perfect witness to the texture and meaning of a cultured paganism that knows it cannot last.

A Durable Consolation

FAITHFUL REASON: ESSAYS CATHOLIC AND PHILOSOPHICAL
By JOHN HALDANE
Routledge. 288 pp. $34.95 paper.

Reviewed by D.S. Oderberg

CONTEMPORARY Western philosophy can be roughly divided into two camps. I am not here thinking of the usual division between the analytical and continental schools. Rather, I have in mind that between those thinkers who see philosophy as primarily a technical subject aimed at solving self-contained problems using logico-mathematical techniques, and those who see philosophy as a humane discipline aiming at the love of wisdom.

A number of years ago it was seriously proposed to me by one eminent American philosopher that philosophy is "nothing but a series of crossword puzzles": one tackles a problem with one's technical toolbox, does one's best, then moves on to something perhaps entirely unconnected, with no thought of an overall picture or synthesis. More recently, a younger philosopher with a reputation to build told me that he neither cared about the ultimate truth nor thought that it could be attained: the aim was to come up with the most technically impressive and original theory that would make the most waves and command the greatest attention. Again, the overarching picture counted for nothing.

It is true that continental philosophers have a reputation for being more concerned with worldviews and syntheses—with relating philosophy to ordinary life and to the big picture. Analytical philosophers, on the other hand, are reputed to be more concerned with, well, *analysis*—technical minutiae, the meanings of words and concepts, logical consistency, endless distinctions, and so on. Though these caricatures still have a ring of truth, it is no longer so easy to lampoon analytical philosophy as wholly unconcerned with worldviews and syntheses. Though the analytical school has typically been less concerned with history than continental philosophers—especially with bridging the gap between the history of ideas and contemporary philosophical problems—one now finds at least some prominent analytical philosophers paying far more attention to history than has been the norm.

John Haldane is one of the prime examples of a philosopher born and bred in the analytical tradition who

D.S. ODERBERG *is professor of philosophy at the University of Reading and the author of many books and articles on metaphysics, ethics, and other philosophical topics, including* Moral Theory *and* Applied Ethics, *both published by Blackwell.*

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takes philosophy to be the humane discipline it has traditionally been—the love of wisdom and the search for understanding. In particular, Haldane is committed to the idea that one can be a Catholic philosopher in the modern world, despite the difficulties. He is convinced, moreover, that it is the methods and techniques of the analytical school that should be brought to bear on the perennial concerns of Catholic philosophy: "My teachers were, and my colleagues are, thoroughly analytical and I am a fully subscribing member of the same community.... In my experience, those who react most strongly to the phrase 'Catholic philosophy' are those who have not had the advantages of an analytical upbringing."

THE DIFFICULTY WITH being a Catholic philosopher in the modern world has nothing to do with, say, proving the existence of God. While some self-professed Catholic philosophers, and indeed many Christian thinkers of all stripes, regard the attempt to offer a logical proof of the existence of God as almost an outrage, within analytical philosophy there is a vibrant strain of philosophical theism running on all cylinders. One need only think of such impressive minds as Alvin Plantinga and William Lane Craig. Even Quentin Smith, a powerful foe of theism, now believes that analytical philosophy of religion is so strong that philosophers can no longer in good conscience take atheism as the default position in philosophy.

Nor is the difficulty anything to do with Catholic doctrine. For any philosopher willing to do the hard thinking required, it is no more difficult to reconcile faith and reason than it was in the time of Aquinas. This does not mean it is *easy*, but plenty of good work has been—and is being—done. No Catholic philosopher should shy away from seeking to demonstrate the coherence and nonrepugnance to reason of even the most abstruse or unlikely of Catholic doctrines. Haldane gives a fine example in his essays on the Assumption and the Incarnation.

Indeed, analytical philosophy is replete with techniques and concepts that help us show the coherence of Catholic doctrine. That is why, as Haldane insists, a commitment to philosophy as the love of wisdom must not exclude a concern with technical details and conceptual minutiae. Broad brushstrokes are not enough, especially in an age as rotted by skepticism and relativism as our own. When it comes to restoring philosophy's role as handmaid to theology, the angels will be in the detail.

No, the real difficulty for the Catholic philosopher, as Haldane himself notices, lies more in the state of Catholicism than in Catholic doctrine. The finest analytical philosophers of religion are nearly all Protestants of various stripes (a historical irony if ever there was one). The commitment to rigor and logic is absent from many seminaries and self-professed Catholic universities. Indeed, the very idea of Catholic philosophy, especially of *a* Catholic philosophy, is anathema to most Catholic thinkers and writers. Yet, as Haldane again implicitly recognizes, there is indeed a Catholic philosophy.

THERE CAN BE NO historical doubt that the philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas has been canonised as *the* official philosophy of the Church. The canonisation did not occur in the nineteenth century under Pope Leo XIII; it took place over hundreds of years, from the time of the canonisation of the Angelic Doctor himself. Nevertheless, should there have been any doubt, Leo XIII and his successors made it abundantly clear that Thomism was the official Catholic philosophy, so much so that all Catholic philosophers were required by the Sacred Congregation of Studies in 1914 to subscribe to twenty-four "Thomistic theses" (concerning substance, form and matter, essence and existence, etc.). The 1918 Code of Canon Law affirmed the primacy of Thomism: "Let the professors deal with the study of rational philosophy and theology... entirely according to the thought, doctrine, and principles of the Angelic Doctor and let them hold these things as sacred"—not merely as true, but as *sacred* ("*sancte teneant*").

What has changed? The newer version of the code speaks only of "the perennially valid philosophical heritage." John Paul II, who was never a cheerleader for Thomism, denied in his 1998 encyclical *Fides et Ratio* that there is an "official Philosophy of the Church." Outside more traditional circles, Thomism is not taught in places of Catholic education, at least not as a systematic body of thought, though it may be referred to as a phase in the history of Catholic thinking.

DOES THIS MEAN Leo XIII was wrong, or that St. Pius X, Benedict XV, Pius XI, and Pius XII were mistaken in their repeated affirmation that Thomism is the philosophy of the Church? Haldane doesn't seem to think so. Too much was and is at stake for us to say now that Thomism was a mere episode in the history of Catholic thought. As Haldane argues, "A Catholic may be a good philosopher without being a Thomist and without practicing 'Catholic Philosophy'; but it is worth such a person considering why they would wish to resist the possibility of harnessing their reason to their faith."

Of course, one could seek to harness reason to faith as a Scotist, say, or as an Augustinian, and the more one examines the history of Scholastic philosophy, the more various—and less exclusively Thomistic—it appears. We also know how eclectic Aquinas himself was in the authorities he cited or exploited in the development of his own ideas. So it is not as though the Church has ever placed

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a philosopher outside the pale *merely* for not being a Thomist. Still, the Church does have an entrenched view of Thomism as the exemplar of philosophy, and as the philosophy least likely to lead one astray. That very general rule leaves plenty of room for particular disagreements. For example, Aquinas, following Aristotle, denied that one could prove by reason that the world had a beginning; St. Robert Bellarmine differed—being a Thomist did not mean he had to believe every single thing St. Thomas taught.

John Haldane nails his colors firmly to the mast of the Thomist barque. The result is impressive. He covers a range of philosophical topics, with insightful pieces on Alasdair MacIntyre, the nature of orthodoxy, infallibility, ethics, politics, tolerance, Chesterton, education, aesthetics, architecture, and the environment. All of the essays are imbued with a fine historical sensibility, attention to detail, and charity to those who hold opposing views. Sometimes that charity leads Haldane to an excessively irenic view of challenges to the Church. In articles such as "Critical Orthodoxy," Haldane seems to suggest that the only thing that divides orthodoxy from its opponents is a simple and easily corrected misunderstanding. If dissidents could only be made to see how far they depart from Catholic doctrine, they would quickly return to the fold. Perhaps Haldane believes this, or perhaps he is simply too polite a philosopher (compared, say, to Peter Geach or Elizabeth Anscombe) to describe the full gravity of the situation.

One might have wished for more combativeness on Haldane's part. But then, it may be that the state of Catholic philosophy is so poor that all a Catholic philosopher of good will can do is to state and restate perennial truths and their supporting arguments, in the hope that true devotees of faithful reason will hear and understand. A polemical dialogue with the deaf will achieve little. Better perhaps to draw on the consolations philosophy has to offer, so beautifully expounded by Boethius and elegantly analyzed here by Haldane. As long as there are Catholic philosophers, indeed philosophers generally, who care about mankind and its future, about the state of society and the place of God within it, and who can discuss and expound the eternal verities with grace and understanding, the profession of philosopher will never be a badge of shame.

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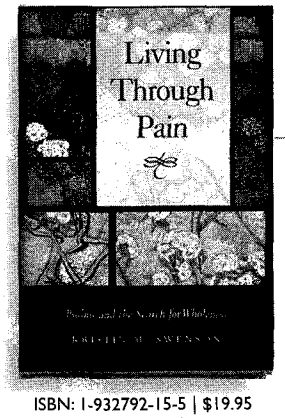

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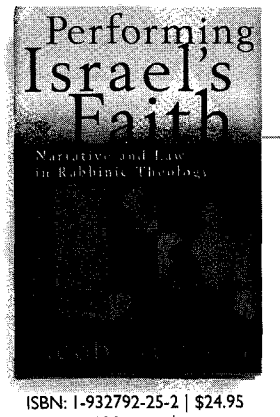

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Good History, Bad Argument

CATHOLICS AND CONTRACEPTION: AN AMERICAN HISTORY
By LESLIE WOODCOCK TENTLER
Cornell University Press
335 pp. $29.95.

Reviewed by Janet E. Smith

LESLIE WOODCOCK Tentler maintains that mature Catholics reject their Church's teaching on contraception. Indeed, in her recent *Catholics and Contraception: An American History*, she holds that greater sensitivity to the realities of marriage and sexuality will eventually lead the Church to abandon that teaching.

Perhaps it is a tribute to a book that readers are led, by the facts it presents, to conclusions quite the opposite of those advanced by the author. Much of *Catholics and Contraception* indicates that the Catholic Church at one time, even in the face of a hostile cultural climate, successfully formed Catholics in accord with its teaching. Tentler ably demonstrates that in the first half of the twentieth century there was a concerted effort by bishops and priests to promote the Church's teaching on contraception—and that Catholics complied at an impressive rate, apparently quite happily so and with little resentment.

Tentler writes about a few priests whose presentations against contraception were excessively harsh or insensitive, but she also notes a number of upbeat and pastorally adept priests. "Many laity admired their Church's increasingly lonely defense of a procreative sexual ethic. Many shared their clergy's anxieties when it came to emancipated views of sex. And a great many Catholics responded with a visceral surge of tribal loyalty when public proponents of birth control attacked the Catholic Church," Tentler observes. "Young Catholics, then, especially the best educated, were among the teaching's most fervent proponents, with birthrates exceeding the burgeoning national average. Aspiring to domestic sanctity, these young idealists won the admiration of numerous priests, who were thereby confirmed in their own commitment to a near-heroic sexual discipline."

JANET E. SMITH *is the Father Michael J. McGivney Chair of Life Ethics at the Sacred Heart Major Seminary in Detroit, Michigan.*

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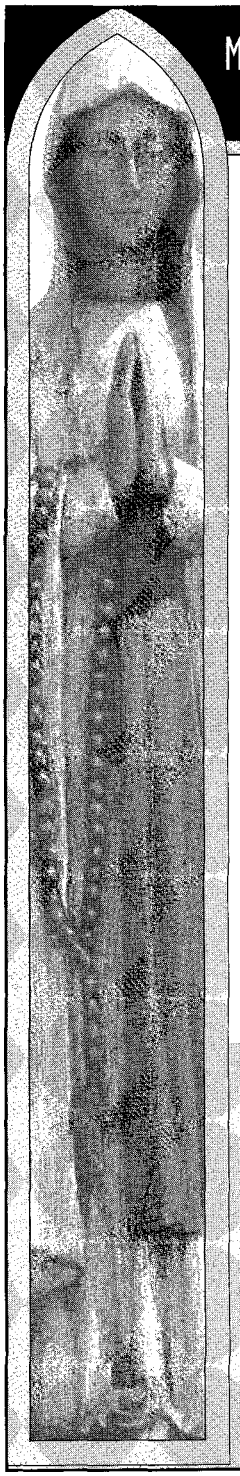
Few Catholics today report that they have ever heard a homily supporting the Church's teaching on any sexual matter, let alone contraception. Tentler's book thoroughly belies the misconception that it was always thus. She uses diocesan archives to show that before 1960 many missions devoted to the topic of contraception were preached by priests from various religious orders. In some dioceses, priests were expected to preach on the subject at least once a year, and it was not unusual for priests to raise the issue of contraception in the confessional. Tentler speaks of the powerful witness of slim, sophisticated, and serene Catholic women who seemed to manage the demands of large families very ably. On editorial pages of secular newspapers, bishops engaged pro-contraception crusaders such as Margaret Sanger. They periodically mobilized their priests to read pastoral letters against attempts to overturn laws that banned or restricted contraception. Bishops wrestled with the government over programs that distributed condoms in the military and to welfare recipients. They also campaigned against promotion of contraception in third-world countries as a means of population control.

Tentler reports that her interviews with fifty-six priest "informants," ordained mostly in the Midwest between 1938 and 1963, demonstrate that most priests reject the Church's



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teaching on contraception. But surely Tentler could have found other priests, even in that age group, who support the teaching. She speaks of the courage of those who dared to speak out against it; she might discover that those who have defended the teaching have suffered significant persecution from those advocating change. Tentler concedes that there is a growing number of young Catholics who embrace the Church's teaching (although she rather condescendingly suggests that as their families grow they will probably change their minds). She also claims that young priests who accept the teaching are merely papal loyalists, unable to offer any coherent arguments for their position. Tentler makes no mention of the various natural-family-planning groups (indeed, she still speaks of the "rhythm method") and no mention of the rapidly growing popularity of the theology of the body among laypeople and priests.

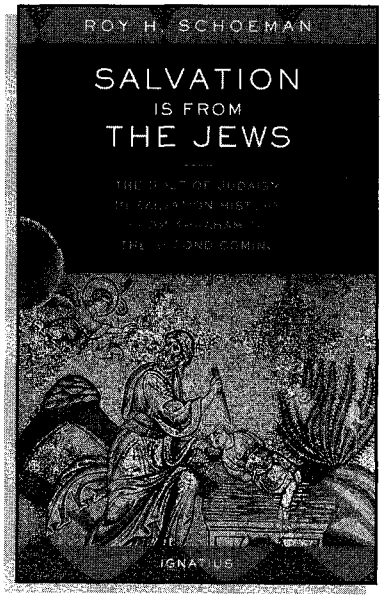
Catholics and Contraception would profit from a larger data pool; a good start would be *Sterilization Reversals*, a book of testimonies by Catholics who had recourse to sterilization and later came to regret it.

It is curious that Tentler never mentions what forms of contraception were being used in the years she studies. She does not report how effective contraception was during that time, or how satisfied contraceptors were with their sex lives, their marriages, and their family size.

Along the way, Tentler casually notes the possibility that widespread use of contraception might have something to do with the "hypersexualization" of our culture; she nonetheless believes that contraception is the antidote to a host of marital problems. She does not consider the possibility that contraception has created more problems than it has solved. Surely it is now time for a long sober look at the likely connection between widespread contraceptive use and promiscuity, unwed pregnancy, abortion, divorce, and even poverty.

Still, even Tentler's insufficient material tends to undermine her argument. While reading *Catholics and Contraception*, I discovered a new hero, Father John Ford, who worked very hard to get the Vatican and the American episcopacy to continue their strong advocacy of the Church's teaching on sexuality. Thus, in spite of my complaints, I am enthusiastically recommending this book as a portrait of a vibrant time in the Church's past, one I think young priests and young couples might well revive.

"More than just good reading. What this book offers will change and deepen the faith of every Christian who reads it." —*The Pilot*



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The "I" of Christ

SAINT CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA AND THE CHRISTOLOGICAL CONTROVERSY
By JOHN MCGUCKIN
St. Vladimir's Seminary Press
430 pp. $22.95 paper.

Reviewed by Edward T. Oakes

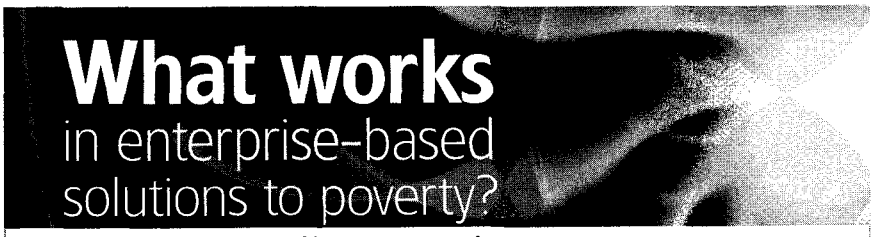
ALL GREAT writers, all *important* writers, sooner or later fall victim to the received wisdom of the secondary literature about them. Just ask Plato. How many people know anything more about Plato than his Allegory of the Cave, with maybe his Divided Line thrown in? Who goes beyond these shopworn clichés to discover that Plato also leveled the most severe criticisms against the very theory he is supposed to have fathered? Or that his dialogues are so rich in dramatic give-and-take that they usually end up leaving the reader in continued perplexity, not in settled doctrine?

Imagine, then, the problem if the writer is not someone as well known as Plato. Cyril of Alexandria, for instance, is certainly great and important, for without him we would have neither the Council of Ephesus (which declared Mary to be the Mother of God) nor the Council of Chalcedon (which vigorously defended the full divinity and full humanity of Jesus). But in Cyril's case, translations of his works are spotty. The controversies that most engaged him now seem mind-numbingly arcane. And, perhaps worst of all, the author of the received wisdom about Cyril is no less a figure than Edward Gibbon, who in his epochal *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* determined for the next two centuries our image of the irascible patriarchal bishop of Byzantine Alexandria. Here, for example, is Gibbon's account of Cyril's campaign to drive the Jews out of his diocese:

> Without any legal sentence, without any royal mandate, the patriarch, at the dawn of day, led a seditious multitude to the attack of the synagogues. Unarmed and unprepared, the Jews were incapable of resistance; their houses of prayer were leveled with the ground, and the episcopal warrior, after rewarding his troops with the plunder of their goods, expelled from the city the remnant of the unbelieving nation. Perhaps he might plead the insolence of their prosperity, and their deadly hatred of the Christians, whose blood they had recently shed in a malicious or accidental tumult. Such crimes would have deserved the animadversion of the magistrate; but in this promiscuous outrage, the innocent were confounded with the guilty, and Alexandria was impoverished by the loss of a wealthy and industrious colony.

CLEARLY ANYONE who sets out to give a sympathetic portrait of Cyril, let alone an outright defense of the man, has his work cut out for him. But John McGuckin, a Greek Orthodox priest now teaching at Union Theological Seminary in New York City, succeeds brilliantly. McGuckin is not so foolish as to try to defend the indefensible. Instead, he tries to set Cyril in his context in fifth-century Alexandria. Almost half of *Saint Cyril of Alexandria and the Christological Controversy* consists of McGuckin's translation of works by Cyril that have been either

EDWARD T. OAKES, S.J., *is co-editor of* The Cambridge Companion to Hans Urs von Balthasar.



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unavailable in English or available only in rather musty Victorian versions. McGuckin also gives us a monograph on Cyril's theology that is a model of clarity, fairness, and subtlety.

As to Cyril's reputation for intolerance—admittedly, a well-deserved one—McGuckin argues that we should be wary of imposing on pre-Enlightenment figures like Cyril what Herbert Butterfield called the Whig interpretation of history, according to which all prior ages are to be judged by the standards outlined in John Locke's *Essay on Toleration*. It is an established fact of history that in the late Roman Empire no consensus had developed for dealing with moral and religious pluralism. Christians saw both Judaism and paganism as the enemies of their religion, just as Judaism and paganism regarded Christianity—and each other—as false and dangerous. Hence the persecution of the Christians by the Roman emperors and the pagan pogroms against the Jews in Alexandria before the advent of Christianity. As to Cyril's campaign to destroy or expropriate pagan shrines, McGuckin reminds us that "the early church did not regard the pagan temples as barren conventicles of false superstition," but "as the active centers of demonic enmity and malice to local Christians."

After this mostly sympathetic biographical section, the book opens out onto a vista of remarkable theological brilliance, both McGuckin's and Cyril's. Unfortunately, what counted as theological brilliance in Cyril's time can seem like vain or obnoxious hairsplitting in our post-Humean age. Here McGuckin is at his most successful, for he succeeds in showing the importance of fifth-century debates about the Person of Christ—not only to people of the fifth century but to us.

The problem at first seems merely conceptual: How can Jesus be both human and divine—*fully* human and *fully* divine—without his divinity crowding out his humanity, or vice versa? One solution came from Apollinaris not quite a century earlier. He taught that the Logos of God, the Second Person of the Trinity, was in Jesus a substitute for the human soul (or at least its "higher" rational element). But this position was condemned in 381 AD by the first Council of Constantinople, which insisted that what Jesus has not assumed has not been saved: since sin is first and foremost a rational act of will, Apollinaris has in effect robbed us of our salvation.

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In reaction to Apollinaris, theologians from Antioch claimed that since both God and human beings are possessed of their own subject-centers, the same must hold of Jesus: the Logos of God and the human soul of Jesus must sit separately behind the "mask" (the original meaning of "person") of the divine-human actor. This position, however, ran into its own intolerable antinomies. For if the Antiochenes are right, who was the "I" speaking when Jesus used the first-person pronoun? When he said "I thirst," was the "I" different from the "I" that said, "Before Abraham was, I am"? Startlingly, most of the Antiochenes, led by Nestorius, agreed—at least before they had to meet the objections of the formidable Cyril. For Cyril, Antiochene exegesis had lurched into soteriological schizophrenia, with Jesus switching off his divine power to weep over the death of Lazarus and switching it on again to bring him back to life. But after the condemnation of Apollinaris the option of ascribing the "I" of Jesus only to the divine Logos was equally impossible.

CYRIL'S ACHIEVEMENT was to have pointed the way toward a solution to this great riddle, perhaps the greatest in Christianity. Cyril began by focusing not so much on the philosophical conundrum entailed by the Incarnation as on God's purpose in sending His Son to die in our place. As McGuckin lucidly summarizes Cyril's approach:

> This is the way he answers two key questions about the incarnation: "Why did it happen?" and, "How did it happen?" To both queries he replies: "As an economy of salvation." To say that the Logos was born is, for Cyril, not the nonsense Nestorius thought it to be, any more than to say the Logos suffered or died, because the apparent paradox brings home to the believer the constantly presumed context—that these things, birth, suffering, death, and resurrection, took place "economically," that is, as a practical exercise of the Logos who assumed a human bodily life not pointlessly but in order to work out the salvation of the human race in and through that bodily condition.

The great merit of this position is that it enabled Cyril to follow through on the implications of the decree of the Council of Ephesus,

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which had declared Mary to be the Mother of God precisely because she bore the single-subject Jesus, who is both God and man. The bishops at Ephesus had joined Cyril in claiming that the Incarnation entailed an "exchange of attributes" (the *communicatio idiomatum*). But Cyril went further: He saw that if Mary is the Mother of God precisely because she is the mother of Jesus, then the human nature of Jesus is at once powerful and fragile, majestic and humble. Cyril took these paradoxes to their ultimate limit, bluntly declaring, "The Impassible One suffered" (*ho Apathos epathen*).

Here Cyril was certainly bolder than the Latin theologians, but the lack of theological daring in Latin Christology has somewhat slanted McGuckin's interpretation of Pope Leo I, whose famous *Tome* was read out before the assembled bishops at Chalcedon to unanimous acclaim: "Peter has spoken through Leo!" The standard Western account of that episode claims for Rome a balance of approach lacking in the more disputatious Greek theologians, who were still too besotted by the neo-Platonic speculations common in the East. McGuckin disagrees. He points out, rightly, that the bishops not only accepted Leo's intervention as the voice of Peter but went on to say, "So also did Cyril teach." (Cyril had died seven years before Chalcedon.) According to McGuckin, the bishops accepted Leo because, and *only* because, he taught the same thing as Cyril, who alone was the test for Christological orthodoxy. McGuckin also makes the much more radical claim that the decree of Chalcedon was meant as a deliberative corrective to Leo's *Tome*.

This thesis will not stand up to scrutiny. The decree the Eastern bishops supported clearly represented a middle passage between the extremes of Antioch and Alexandria. Cyril had favored the term "hypostasis" to denote the union of divine and human in Jesus, while the Antiochenes preferred "person." Chalcedon used both terms. Similarly, Cyril generally spoke of a hypostatic union "from" two natures, whereas Leo and the Antiochenes insisted on the union taking place "in" two natures—and that is the formulation Chalcedon chose. Finally, we know that the Alexandrians themselves detected these "concessions" to Antiochene theology because Cyril's more hotheaded successors (Eutyches and Dioscorus, primarily) actively rejected the

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Council. That rejection soon led to the Monophysite heresy, which lives on to this day in the Coptic and Ethiopian churches.

That problem aside, John McGuckin's *Saint Cyril of Alexandria and the Christological Controversy* is a book to be welcomed and recommended. Students of this difficult period will be amazed at the verve and clarity the author has brought to his study. Its erudition and speculative brilliance recall John Henry Newman's *The Arians of the Fourth Century*. Even more, McGuckin has amply justified Newman's famous observation in the *Development of Doctrine* that Antioch is "the very metropolis of heresy" whereas it "may almost be laid down as an historical fact that [Cyril's] mystical interpretation and orthodoxy will stand or fall together."

Oz's Israel

A TALE OF LOVE AND DARKNESS
By AMOS OZ
Harcourt. 544 pp. $26.

Reviewed by Shalom Carmy

JUST OVER FORTY years ago, a university literature student named Amos Oz summoned the courage to ring S.Y. Agnon's doorbell. Upon hearing the young man's name, the Nobel Prize–winning novelist asked: "Aren't you the child who, having been left an orphan by his poor mother and distanced himself from his father, went off to live the life of the kibbutz? Are you not he who in his youth was reprimanded by his parents in this very house, because he used to pick the raisins off the cake?"

Readers of Oz have long known the autobiographical background to many of his fiction's most memorable characters. The sad or manic heroines—such as Hannah Gonen in *My Michael* and the mother in "The Hill of Evil Counsel"—harken back to Oz's mother, the doomed Fania Klausner, who took her life when her only son was twelve. The voluble pedants—such as the father in *Fima*, addicted to explicating the "point" of his lengthy anecdotes—recall Oz's father. And the odd adolescents—such as the boy who appears out of nowhere to join a kibbutz in *A Perfect Peace*—retell some of Oz's own experience.

SHALOM CARMY *teaches Jewish Studies and Philosophy at Yeshiva University in New York. He is also the editor of* Tradition.

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But now, in *A Tale of Love and Darkness*, Amos Oz has set aside fiction to write a straightforward memoir. His mother's descent into depression is the central story, but Oz's book—one of his longest and most complex—attempts much more. He traces the family back to Europe, describes the social life of his lower-middle-class Jerusalem neighborhood and the political hopes of his parents' generation, retails first-hand gossip about the personalities he encountered as a youngster, and sketches the inner landscape of a precocious, troubled boy who became a major writer.

In a town glutted with émigré intellectuals, Arieh Klausner—compulsive explainer, walking etymological dictionary and maker of puns, author of books on comparative literature—eked out his living as a librarian. He sarcastically called his son "Your Highness," and in winter warmed the boy's freshly squeezed orange juice in a pan to ward off the chill. Fania kept house, charmed her social circle, and read a lot.

Oz means the "darkness" in his memoir's title literally: a description of the Klausners' cramped, two-room basement apartment opens the book. During the 1948 siege of Jerusalem, these two rooms accommodated refugees from more vulnerable neighborhoods, who stepped over the sleeping family at night on their way to the toilet that could not be flushed for lack of water. One of the refugees was Arieh's uncle, the childless Professor Joseph Klausner. In normal times, Uncle Joseph lived in a nearby neighborhood among the privileged intellectuals. On Sabbath afternoons he would be visited at home by his many admirers, including his nephew. Uncle Joseph's admiring books on early Christianity had made his name among non-Jews. At the Hebrew University, which was dominated by anti-war Jews who had come from Germany, the hawkish and Odessa-born Klausner felt insufficiently esteemed. Lampooned mercilessly as "Professor Bakhlam" in Agnon's novel *Shirah*, Uncle Joseph gets tough but sympathetic treatment in Oz's memoir.

The militancy of the Klausner family was more talk than deeds. The contribution of Oz's father to Menachem Begin's underground insurgency against the British was limited to helping with the occasional propaganda leaflet. In a passage written to be quoted, even by those who do not share the mature Oz's leftist convictions, he reports his father's tearful

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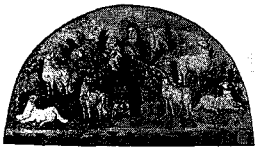

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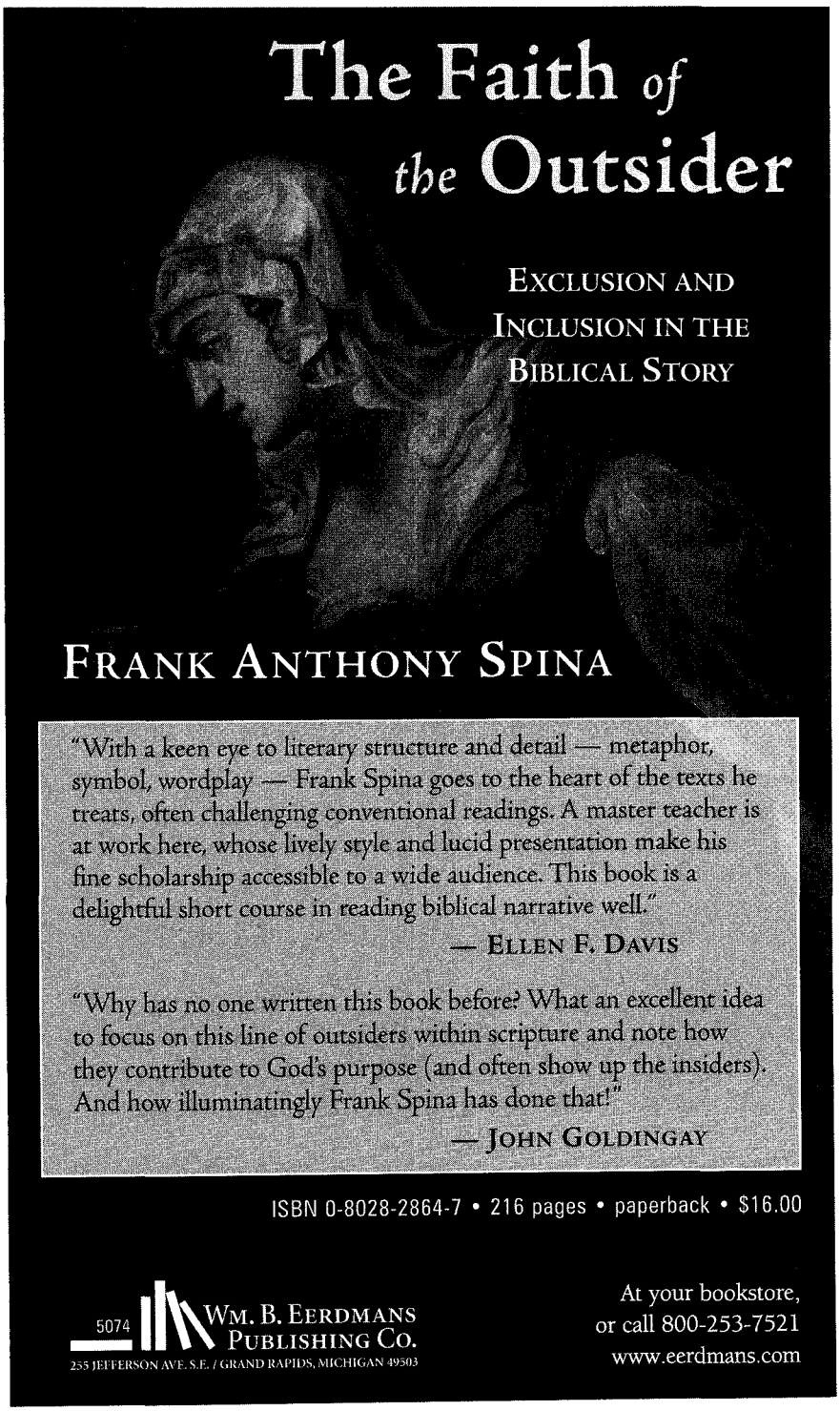
response (the only time he ever displayed emotion to his son) to the public broadcast of the U.N. vote partitioning Palestine between Jews and Arabs: "Bullies may well bother you in the street or in school someday. They may do it precisely because you are a little bit like me. But from now on, from the moment we have our own state, you will never be bullied just because you are a Jew. From tonight that's finished here. Forever." The impact of this utterance has less to do with the doctrines of Revisionist Zionism than with its expression of the Jewish consensus.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Nonetheless, the Klausners were apart from the mainstream. Labor Zionists expended effort, ideology, and pride on the formation of a Jewish infrastructure in mandatory Palestine. That effort was especially visible in the collective agricultural life of the kibbutz and in the Hagana, the "official" Jewish defense arm. But the Revisionist Zionism of Vladimir Jabotinsky—the Zionism of the Klausner family—concentrated on the political goal of establishing a state.

And yet, while they yearned for a national paradise where everything would be different, the languages and landscapes of Europe still possessed their psyches. For all their rhetoric about the "New Hebrew Man," their culture and self-image was still perceptibly bourgeois. Eventually the old Revisionists accepted Menachem Begin as Vladimir Jabotinsky's rightful successor.

But in the period covered by Oz's memoir, they were still not quite at ease with their new leader. Despite his daring deeds, he reminded them too much of the pale-faced, bespectacled Diaspora Jew, and they distrusted his populism, which seemed to appeal to the lower-status, culturally traditional oriental Jews.

THE ISRAELI government, led by David Ben-Gurion, encouraged the Hebraizing of surnames. It is telling that members of the rightist opposition, the Begins and the Klausners, mostly kept their European names, unwilling or unable to cast the past behind them. The child Amos internalized this ambivalence about his family's place in Israel.

In spite of his early and short-lived embrace of nationalist sentiment and language and the military games he played with household objects, he knew that history was elsewhere, away from Jerusalem and what it represented. It belonged, he thought, with the blond, blue-eyed kibbutzniks he later joined.

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In *A Tale of Love and Darkness*, he quotes a mentor at the kibbutz, who says that Begin, with his faith in oratory and clever argumentation, is repeating the mistake of the exilic Jew—hoping to impress the Gentile world with an arsenal of words. So when, as a teenager, young Amos Klausner went off to the kibbutz and reinvented himself as "Oz" (which means "boldness"), it was not only a repudiation of his previous name. It was a resolution to adopt the Hebrew identity from which he felt excluded.

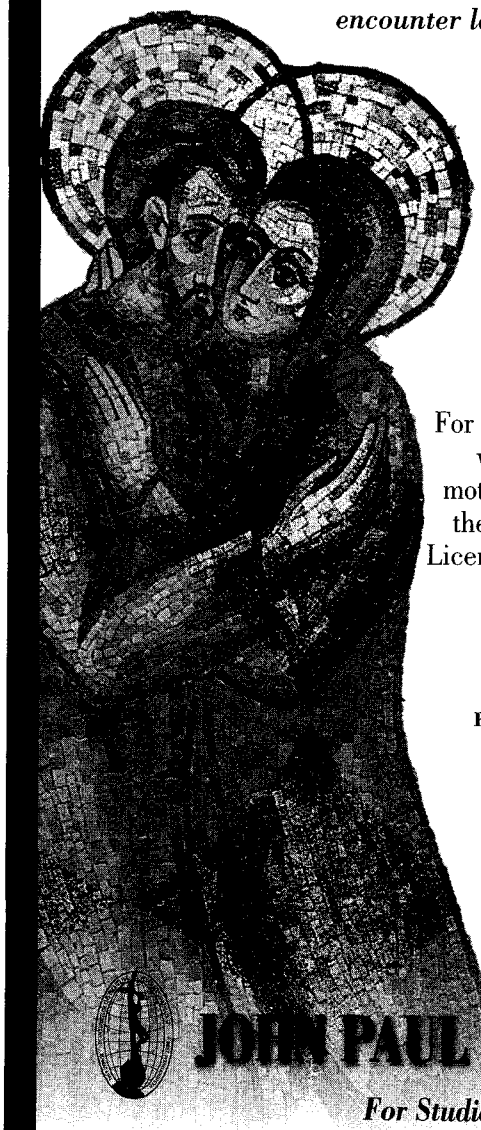
THE POLITICAL leadership of Revisionism at this time was secular and sometimes unlettered about Judaism; it generally chose to "respect" religion from a distance. Begin's positive attitude towards tradition had not yet progressed to the point where it changed the profile of his movement. When danger of street violence prevented Arieh Klausner from sending Amos to the school attended by the professors' children, he chose an Orthodox religious institution—not because he wished to initiate his son in religious practice, but because of animus against the alternative socialist orientation. Convinced that religion was moribund, he did not fear its lasting influence—rather, he was alarmed about education that reinforced government ideology.

Oz's account of his elementary school seems accurate enough. Yet his perspective throughout is that of the outsider. The only religious individual to capture his attention is his second-grade teacher Zelda, a remarkable woman who was the object of his first crush and who opened his mind to literature and language. When he relates his one adult visit to her—he by then a rising literary lion, she a well-known poet—Oz recognizes her flat as the home of a religious woman but conveys little sense of what that might mean. At one point Oz mentions his study of Agnon's treatment of God, *The Silence of Heaven*, whose thesis is that "Agnon believes in God and fears him, but he does not love him." And Oz takes pride in almost confessional responses to his book from Orthodox readers. Nonetheless, despite his success in puncturing the naïve, pious image that Agnon cultivated, here too Oz's vision of religious life betrays nothing of his youthful exposure to it.

A childhood memoir written half a century after the events it describes is inevitably novelistic, and Oz explicitly alludes to the shaping of his narra-

Man cannot live without love.

He remains a being that is incomprehensible for himself, his life is senseless, if love is not revealed to him, if he does not encounter love, if he does not experience it and make it his own, if he does not participate intimately in it.
—John Paul II



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tive in fictional terms. It is not surprising that he sometimes errs in his descriptions of religious behavior. Remembering a rally of the early 1950s at the Edison Cinema on Isaiah Street, Oz has Begin employing a microphone on a Saturday morning—an act that would disconcert and offend the many traditional Jews in the audience. In those days, even staunchly secularist assemblies in Jerusalem did not exhibit microphones on Sabbath; an inaudible speaker would be urged to "talk to the flowerpot" where electronic amplification might be concealed. Likewise the few appearances of Arabs in the narrative have a dreamy, allegorical quality.

As much as any Israeli novelist of his generation, Amos Oz is responsible for liberating his country's fiction from the heavy hand of politically driven "socialist realism." And thus it is unfair to pick the political and cultural raisins from this rich cake of an autobiography. Throughout the book, Oz circles around his mother's breakdown and suicide. His strongest apostrophes of rage, guilt, and frustration occur midway through a narrative interspersed with background stories: tales about his ancestors and their adventures in Europe, his mother's education, the lives of his friends and neighbors, his grandmother's obsession with cleanliness, and his grandfather's eccentricities.

It is as if Amos had conjured up his father's stock of garrulousness and his own narrative talent to stave off the final account of his mother's abandonment. But the chronicle of insomnia, migraines, lack of appetite, and listlessness cannot be evaded. The details of coping with housework, the doctors and pills and rest cures, Arieh's search for female company away from home, and Fania's nocturnal migrations from her room to that of her pubescent son are presented, from Amos's perspective, without pity and with an admirable avoidance of retrospective commentary and diagnosis.

NEAR THE END, on a rainy day brimming with false hope, Fania and Amos dropped in on Arieh at work, and she treated him to lunch to celebrate her recovery. Her appetite was still not good, and as always, Arieh stubbornly chased away the silence. The only other customers were two elderly ladies conversing in German, perhaps mother and daughter. Suddenly the younger woman at the other table "raised her voice and hurled a single German word at the

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old woman opposite. She pronounced it with venomous, piercing rage, like a vulture pouncing on its prey, and then she threw her cup against the wall. In the deeply etched lines on the cheeks of the older woman tears began to run."

Amid the ensuing silence, Amos notices that his mother's face "had turned very pale again, as it was all the time she was ill." Three hundred pages earlier, Amos had observed a parallel scene. Then it was the older woman, his mother's mother, who lost her temper at Fania, "and spat terrible words at her in Russian or Polish mixed with Yiddish," while his mother "sat there like a scolded child, and as her mother shot one venomous question at her after another, all of them soaked and sizzling with sibilants, she said nothing in reply." Suddenly Fania stood up and began punishing herself, slapping her face and tearing her hair.

With this scene, and dozens like it, recollected and re-imagined, the orphaned writer Amos Oz brings his parents and his childhood back to life.

Briefly Noted

Salonica, City of Ghosts: Christians, Muslims, and Jews, 1430-1950.

By Mark Mazower.
Knopf. 528 pp. $35.

In 1430, Sultan Murad II conquered Thessalonica, the second city of Byzantium, for the Ottomans. His successors welcomed Jews expelled by Spain in 1492, and for the next four-and-a-half centuries three religious communities—Christian Greeks, Muslim Turks, and Sephardic Jews—shared the city. In this comprehensive history, Columbia Professor Mark Mazower describes the complicated and often fractious relationship among these groups. Mazower begins in the fifteenth century and ends in the twentieth, when Greek sovereignty, a forced population exchange with Turkey, and Nazi deportation of the city's Jews rendered Salonica once again uniformly Greek. Mazower admires the multiethnic character of the Ottoman city and regrets its passing, but he does not gloss over the problems that Ottoman rule posed for non-Muslims. Christians and Jews were peoples of the book whom Muslims would tolerate—indeed Jews, who were a majority of the city's population, thrived in

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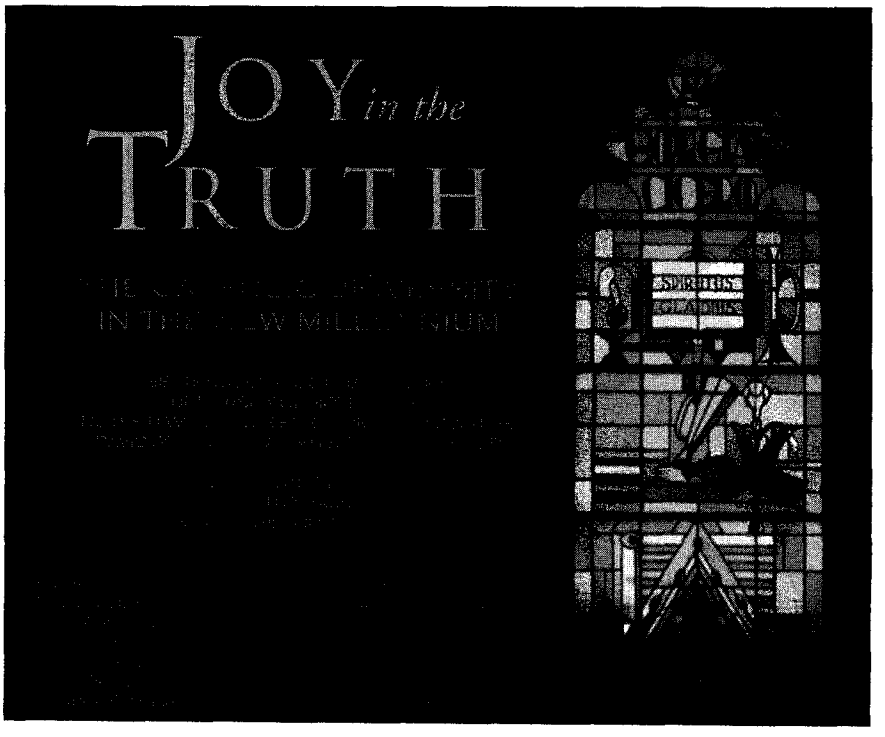

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Ottoman Salonica and made it a center of rabbinical learning—but only if they paid a high tax and accepted second-class status. "The primacy of the ruling faith was axiomatic," Mazower writes, "and any public assertion of the superiority of Christianity over Islam was punished with severity." Pretensions to political equality with Muslims could also lead to violent retaliation. When Greeks outside Salonica rebelled in 1821, Ottoman authorities massacred thousands of Greeks in the city; Christian heads were used to decorate the villas of Muslim notables. While personal relationships could form across confessional lines—families hired servants from other communities, for example—and while some religious leaders encouraged respect and compassion for members of other faiths, the relationship among Christians, Muslims, and Jews was hardly a model of cooperation. Under the Ottoman millet system, each community was a more or less self-governing unit, and the three groups showed little interest in reaching out to one another. As a newspaper complained in 1911, "Salonica is not one city" but "a juxtaposition of tiny villages."

—Mark L. Movsesian

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By JAMES J. O'DONNELL.
HarperCollins. 396 pp. $26.95.

Like spouses in a bad marriage, biographers sometimes grow to hate their subjects—a kind of Stockholm Syndrome in reverse. James O'Donnell, currently provost at Georgetown University, has already written one monograph on St. Augustine in 1985. He then went on to publish a masterly three-volume commentary on the *Confessions* in 1992, providing an amazing amount of background material essential for understanding that most influential (and indeed the first) autobiography in Western letters. But with his most recent biography O'Donnell is clearly ready to file for divorce. While it would be too much to say he hates the Bishop of Hippo (the book's concluding chapters concede a grudging admiration for the man's greatness), the author clearly wants to bring all his erudition (which is considerable) to the task of deconstructing his subject's reputation. The chapter titles and subheadings give away the agenda: "Augustine Unvarnished," "Augustine the Self-Promoter," "Augustine the Social Climber," "Augustine the Troublemaker," on and on. Given the

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author's remarkable learning, most readers are likely to learn a great deal, especially when he uses Augustine's sermons as source material; but the captious tone and prosecutorial zeal of the effort starts to grate as early as the first chapter. A few years back Frank Turner (another provost, this time of Yale University) wrote a similar attack on John Henry Newman and similarly failed to do much damage. Whether this represents a trend among provosts may be doubted, but this at least is not open to doubt: Augustine's reputation will have no difficulty surviving this strangely hostile and belittling book. That's part of what makes great men great: they always transcend their biographers.

—Edward T. Oakes, S.J.

DAWKINS' GOD: GENES, MEMES, AND THE MEANING OF LIFE.
By ALISTER MCGRATH.
Blackwell. 202 pp. $18.95.

As both a scientist (Ph.D. in biophysics) and a Christian, Alister McGrath was asked by Oxford University Press decades ago to confront the noted scientific atheist Richard Dawkins in print. He declined then, but felt the time was ripe now (with a different publisher). The result is a victory in an ivory-tower battle that's of little consequence to the ground war. At the outset McGrath concedes all of evolutionary biology to Dawkins and then asks: Does Dawkins' science, even if true, really rule out religion? McGrath, who is the Oxford University Professor of Historical Theology, shows Dawkins to be an intellectual featherweight on religious topics. For example, Dawkins berates Tertullian as anti-rational for saying of the Christian Gospel, "It is certain because it is impossible." Yet McGrath demonstrates that this single quote was torn badly out of context, and that Tertullian's real attitude was that "there is nothing that God does not wish to be investigated and understood by reason." McGrath concludes that "Dawkins' views on the nature of faith are best regarded as an embarrassment to anyone concerned with scholarly accuracy." Points are also scored on historical grounds. Darwin's views on religion were much less negative than Dawkins'. R.A. Fisher, a founder of theoretical evolutionary genetics, was a strong Christian who pictured evolution as God's ongoing creation. Who is Dawkins, asks McGrath, to belittle theism when such giants of evolutionary theory did not? This is

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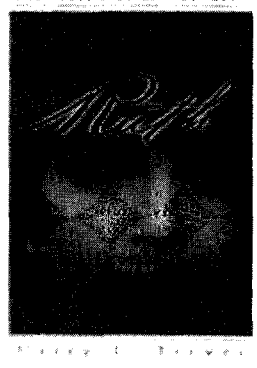

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all fine as far as it goes, which isn't very far. McGrath's whole argument is that Dawkins' evolutionary biology doesn't absolutely demand atheism, but he concedes that it is consistent with unbelief. This clarification is useful but not especially compelling. McGrath discusses these complex issues in the polite style of an academic seminar. Meanwhile, Dawkins and friends are aggressively simplifying their case for millions on radio, television, and in the popular press, where none of McGrath's donnish points counts for much. A number of Christians in academia share McGrath's confidence that only yokels think science can discredit religion. Perhaps they're right. Yet many nonacademic readers are indeed impressed by Dawkins' belligerent, scientistic blather. Few of them have heard of the sophisticated alternative presented here, and even fewer have been persuaded by it. It's well past time for the "no-conflict" crowd to make its most attractive case to a popular audience, to compete with Prof. Dawkins for the imagination of the general public, if they can.

—Michael J. Behe

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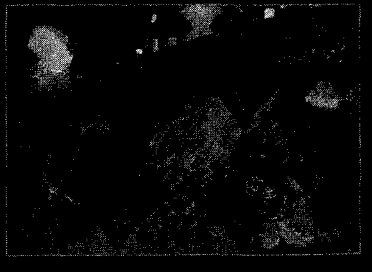

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DO YOU HEAR WHAT I HEAR? RELIGIOUS CALLING, THE PRIESTHOOD, AND MY FATHER.
By MINNA PROCTOR.
Viking Adult. 288 pp. $25.95.

Minna Proctor addresses the problem of vocational discernment as a double outsider: an agnostic daughter describing her father's unsuccessful attempt to become an Episcopalian priest. This perspective brings urgency to her memoir-essay, *Do You Hear What I Hear? Religious Calling, the Priesthood, and My Father.* Proctor can't take anything for granted—she tries to figure out why religion and the priesthood matter to her father and whether they should matter to her. Unfortunately, *Do You Hear What I Hear?* never coheres enough to provide an illuminating answer to these questions. Proctor's book is really three smaller pieces clumsily soldered together: a moving depiction of her relationship with her father after her parents' divorce; a grimly factual trudge through the Episcopal "discernment" bureaucracy; and, in the book's final section, an interesting call to change our understanding of how someone should prove his fitness for the priesthood. Proctor is understandably dismayed at the spectacle of a committee poking and

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prodding an applicant in an attempt to judge the nature of his relationship with God and the veracity of his "calling." She notes the buzzwords ("sacramental presence," "vulnerability") and the push for "Oprah"-style emotional displays. Her solution is, essentially, to de-emphasize the notion of vocation, to ask not "Is this man really, truly called by God to be a priest?"—a question she doubts an outsider can answer—but, rather, "Can this man do the work of a priest?" It's certainly a humbler and more answerable question. Proctor's father's religion, as portrayed in this book, is a matter of traditions, rootedness, community, and guidance for right action. Jesus doesn't get a lot of airtime. It's hard not to feel that the point has been missed. The book has many other flaws: Proctor's magpie quotations (the hallmark of the journalist's insta-education); her overuse (once is too much) of the word "mantic"; her extended detour with a talkative environmentalist nun. But *Do You Hear What I Hear?* does succeed in conveying the absurdities of the current Episcopalian "discernment process," while trying to understand why the process developed the way it did.

—Eve Tushnet

THE ROLE OF JUSTIFICATION IN CONTEMPORARY THEOLOGY.
By MARK C. MATTES.
Eerdmans. 198 pp. $25 paper.

At a time when most Christian theologies are driven toward ecumenical convergence if not consensus, facing up to the harder edges of doctrine is not an enterprise that many theologians are inclined to take on. This is especially the case when it comes to the doctrine of justification by faith alone. The "Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification" has just celebrated its fifth anniversary with a variety of local, national, and international festivities. Lutherans and Roman Catholics who have not wholeheartedly embraced the joint declaration are looked upon as obstructionists. In *The Role of Justification in Contemporary Theology*, the Lutheran theologian Mark C. Mattes goes beyond the controversy surrounding the joint declaration itself to describe and assess the place of the doctrine of justification in five prominent Protestant theologians: Eberhard Jüngel, Wolfhart Pannenberg, Jürgen Moltmann, Robert W. Jenson, and Oswald Bayer. Along the way, Mattes argues strenuously against all easy reductions of the doctrine: It is, he insists, the critical feature of Christian theology, and so it must not be compromised by programs of ecumenism or ethics. Indeed, facing the truth of justifica-

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tion will be of ultimate benefit to both ecumenical engagement and the grounding of ethics. Mattes' engaging and vigorous book demonstrates how elusive the doctrine of justification is—not only for the purposes of ecumenical dialogue but also within Protestant theology. For those tempted to overestimate the significance of the joint declaration, this book will be a sobering reminder of unfinished Reformation business—*simul iustus et peccator*—that cannot be effectively managed by church officialdom.

—*John T. Pless*

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POPE BENEDICT XVI: A PERSONAL PORTRAIT.
By H.J. FISCHER.
Crossroad. 213 pp. $19.95.

Crossroad is first out of the gate with a biographical book on the new pope. (Continuum's dishonest reissue of John Allen's earlier book on Cardinal Ratzinger, retitled by the publisher as *Pope Benedict XVI*, doesn't count, being an embarrassment that has been disowned by the author.) The present book by a German journalist who has known the pope for decades is not a biography but a "personal portrait," and as such is limited but useful. Fischer has great respect for Benedict's intellect, a sympathetic understanding of the position he has assumed, and a deep personal liking for the man. At the same time, he is conflicted about whether, or in what way, Benedict will be a "reformist" pope. Fischer seems to side with those who think the Church should lighten up on sexual ethics, "abolish" priestly celibacy, and ordain women. The pontificate of John Paul the Great was, in his view, simultaneously too rigid and too tumultuous. Yet Fischer also recognizes the necessary weight of tradition that stands in the way of liberal desiderata for change, and ends on the note that the younger generation of "new Catholics" are "postliberal" in that they are less interested in the progressive agenda for change than in the Catholic Church providing a trustworthy alternative to the madnesses of the contemporary world. The book is more than a little padded, including, *inter alia*, the full texts of Benedict's homilies, and a chronology of popes with a brief discussion of each of the prior popes who used the name "Benedict." Nonetheless, *Pope Benedict XVI* will be of considerable interest to those who want to understand the mind and spirit of the 264th successor to St. Peter.

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South Park Conservatives: The Revolt Against Liberal Media Bias.
By Brian C. Anderson.
Regnery. 191 pp. $24.95.

The monopoly of the overwhelmingly liberal establishment media is in the process of being broken, writes Brian Anderson of the Manhattan Institute, by conservative talk shows, bloggers, and irreverent television programs such as "South Park." A final chapter offers a less sanguine, but still hopeful, view of the leftist dominance of the academy. While the book will jolly up conservatives, the less partisan-minded will wonder if it is good news that, if Anderson is right, there is today no forum that even approximates an honest meeting place for opposing positions. The "revolt" in the subtitle suggests that conservatives are keenly aware that there still is an establishment and they are not anywhere near being it. A more dour reading of *South Park Conservatives* is that Andrew Sullivan was right several years ago when he opined that there is no longer an American culture, only conflicting subcultures.

God and Man at Georgetown Prep: How I Became a Catholic Despite 20 Years of Catholic Schooling.
By Mark Gavreau Judge.
Crossroad. 192 pp. $18.95 paper.

A young man's compelling account of how a putatively Catholic education led him away from the Church, and how he was led back to the discovery of Catholicism as though for the first time. At times bitter and angry, and occasionally over the top, Judge's story is enriched by a poignant appreciation of his father's faith and wisdom, a faith and wisdom that, after many wrong turns, he has made his own. His story is that of a large and growing number of young people who suffered through the silly season of flawed and failed "renewals," finally returning to the high adventure of the truth that is, as Augustine said, ever ancient, ever new. Colleen Carroll Campbell has called our attention to a younger generation she calls "The New Faithful," of which Judge's book is an engaging case study. *God and Man at Georgetown Prep* is warmly recommended for young people, their parents, and teachers who have tired of trivial alternatives to the majesty of the tradition they are called to transmit.

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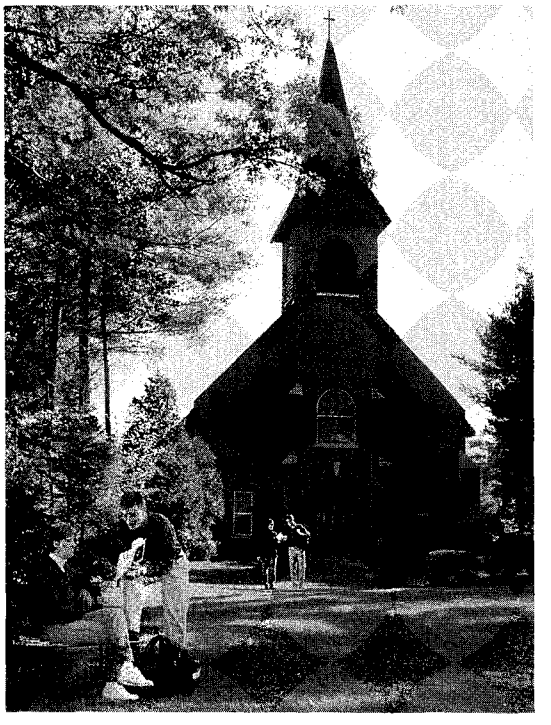

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Richard John Neuhaus

THE EVANGELICAL MOMENT

In the many worlds of evangelical Protestantism today there is enormous vitality—including theological vitality. That makes possible substantive conversations, such as the project known as Evangelicals and Catholics Together (ECT). Nobody has contributed more to that conversation than Dr. Timothy George, a Baptist who is dean of Beeson Divinity School and who will also deliver our annual Erasmus Lecture in October. In the June/July issue we published "The Pattern of Christian Truth," in which George argues that, despite evangelicalism's emphasis on the authority of the Bible, evangelicals "too often construe its authority as a kind of divine reference book, a sort of inspired manual, that can be understood quite apart from the Christian heritage of Bible-based theology and wisdom across the centuries." There is, he says, a propensity for reading the Bible apart from, and sometimes against, the history of Christian orthodoxy, which results in novelties that are, in the precise sense of the word "heretical," when we remember that the Greek *haeresis* means "choice."

In my last years as a Lutheran I published a book titled *The Catholic Moment*. Turnabout is fair play and Kenneth J. Collins, a professor of theology at Asbury Theological Seminary, has now brought out *The Evangelical Moment: The Promise of an American Religion* (Baker, 288 pp.). It is in many ways a useful book, especially in its description of the various forms of evangelical Protestantism: historical evangelicalism, reformational evangelicalism, Puritan and pietistic evangelicalism, awakening evangelicalism, revivalistic evangelicalism, charismatic evangelicalism, and fundamentalist/neoevangelicalism.

Members of these many groups and their subgroups may dispute Collins' depiction of their "distinctives," but all would likely agree with his claim, shared by almost all who write on this subject, that evangelicals are marked by four characteristics: commitment to the authority of Scripture, the atoning work of Christ, the necessity of personal conversion, and the imperative to evangelize others. A problem, of course, is that a quarter to a third of Roman Catholics, Eastern Orthodox, and oldline Protestants in America also answer to those characteristics. The result is that Collins never quite gets beyond the widespread perception that an evangelical is a Christian who is negatively defined as being not Catholic, not Eastern Orthodox, and not a liberal Protestant.

In recent decades, evangelicalism has been further torn by heated disputes over the "inerrancy" of the Bible, meaning that the Scriptures, at least in their original texts, are literally true in all matters they address, including chronology, biology, and geography. Collins suggests that the "battle for the Bible" is now over, with 40 percent of the members of the Evangelical Theological Society having abandoned the doctrine of inerrancy.

One may wonder how this progressive reading would sit with the millions of members of, say, the Southern Baptist Convention. Collins also endorses the view that evangelicalism is moving beyond the foundationalist theology of the past and into what is commonly described as a postmodernist understanding of truth. He quotes the very prolific and influential

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British evangelical, Alister McGrath: "The time has come for evangelicalism to purge itself of the remaining foundational influences of the Enlightenment, not simply because the Enlightenment is over, but because of the danger of allowing ideas whose origins and legitimation lie outside the Christian gospel to exercise a decisive influence on that gospel. . . . We have been liberated from the rationalist demand to set out 'logical' and 'rational' grounds for our beliefs. Belief systems possess their own integrities, which may not be evaluated by others as if there were some privileged position from which all may be judged."

Collins has very decided views also on evangelicalism and feminism, to which he devotes a long chapter. He is unimpressed by the fact that the great majority of Christians in the world belong to bodies that, in continuity with two millennia of history, believe women cannot be ordained to what is traditionally called the presbyterate. Their convictions are dismissively attributed to prejudice and their arguments are casually derided as "specious." Striking throughout the book, on this score and others, is the indifference toward Christians in the southern hemisphere—in Africa, Latin America, and Asia where Christianity, especially in its evangelical/pentecostal and Catholic forms, is experiencing explosive growth. That indifference is perhaps implicit in his subtitle's reference to evangelicalism as "an American religion." This national preoccupation is also in severe tension with his repeated claims that the evangelicalism he is describing is committed to the fullness of the catholic—as in universal—experience of the Church.

At crucial points, his argument reflects a certain defensiveness, perhaps because he is a former Catholic who became an evangelical Protestant. He wants it understood that he is as catholic as anybody else, albeit a lower-case "c" catholic, and he much resents the fact that Catholics do not see it that way. Consider the case of a certain Richard John Neuhaus. "If one is born and raised in a Lutheran home and then follows the leading of conscience by converting to Roman Catholicism, as Neuhaus did, then that decision must be respected by all. The Roman Catholic Church, however, apparently does not return the favor in kind." He protests that the Catholic Church does not respect "Protestant converts who have humbly and obediently followed the gentle leading of conscience and the Holy Spirit." Particularly offensive to him is this statement in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*: "Hence they could not be saved who, knowing that the Catholic Church was founded as necessary by God through Christ, would refuse either to enter it or remain in it."

It is hard to understand why Professor Collins is offended. Surely it is obvious that, if one *knows* that about the Catholic Church, if one agrees that the Catholic Church is what she claims to be, one could not be led by conscience and the Holy Spirit to leave the communion of the Catholic Church. It is obvious that Collins does not think the Catholic Church is what she says she is and therefore he is not a Catholic. In the Catholic understanding that is lamentable, but it does not mean he is not saved.

At the same time, Collins is rather aggressive with his own excommunications. Except for extremely rare instances of pastoral necessity, the Catholic Church invites to Holy Communion only those who are in communion with a bishop who is in communion with the bishop of Rome. This, if I understand Collins, means that the Catholic Church is not "Church" at all. He favorably quotes the evangelical theologian Miroslav Volf who writes: "Any church excluding Christians at a given place is not merely a bad church, but rather is no church at all, since a Eucharist to which not all the Christians at a given place might gather would not be merely a morally deficient Eucharist, but rather no Eucharist at all."

So much for Paul, Cyprian, Gregory of Nyssa, Anselm, Augustine, and a host of other worthies, who excluded from communion, for various reasons, people who, in a favored phrase of the author, confessed the lordship of Jesus Christ. The first four ecumenical councils, to which the author is very favorably disposed, decided who would and who would not be admitted to communion. As Timothy George writes in the essay mentioned earlier, "A Church that cannot distinguish heresy from truth, or, even worse, a Church that no longer thinks this is worth doing, is a Church which has lost its right to bear witness to the transforming Gospel of Jesus Christ who declared himself to be not only the Way and the Life, but also the Truth."

About many things Collins is very well read, but then one comes across the most remarkable lacunae. For instance, he repeatedly charges that Rome's ecclesiological claims un-church Eastern Orthodoxy. It is as though he has not read the pertinent documents of Vatican II or the extended and generous treatment of Orthodoxy in the 1995 encyclical *Ut Unum Sint* ("That They May Be One"), which suggest that all that is lacking for full communion between Rome and Orthodoxy is full communion. Nor is there a reference to *Dominus Iesus*, a document issued in 2000 that clearly spells out why Orthodoxy is composed of "sister churches" that are truly Church in a way that other Christian communities are not. One almost gets the impression that, in order to justify his separation from the Catholic Church, Prof. Collins attempts to recruit everybody—from Orthodoxy on the sins of the West

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to liberal Protestants on feminism—for his side and against Rome. I say "almost," for his argument is frequently elusive.

Collins takes issue with fellow evangelical Thomas Oden who has urged that full communion among all Christians can be established on the basis of agreement on the doctrinal consensus of the first millennium. Collins dislikes some of the Marian developments of the second half of the first millennium and therefore plunks for limiting agreement to the first five hundred years. All Christian communities can get together because they are "already orthodox in several key respects in affirming the truth of Scripture, the early creeds, and the four great councils." But then there is the sixteenth century, which, he says, is "the second great creedal epoch of the church" and must be permitted to reform "the subsequent tradition." So all that is now required for Christian unity is that Catholics and Orthodox agree they more or less had it right for the first five centuries but went off the rails for a thousand years until put right by the Protestant reformers of the sixteenth century. This is an ecumenical proposal that, one ventures to predict, will not take us very far.

The Evangelical Moment succeeds in explaining some of the varieties, conflicts, and confusions within the worlds of evangelicaldom. Collins is correct in claiming that evangelicalism, broadly defined, is or is fast becoming the dominant form of Protestantism in America. But he is wrong to suggest it is "an American religion." The religion under discussion is Christianity, of which evangelicalism is a wondrously diverse and vibrant expression. Catholic teaching gratefully recognizes the saving and sanctifying grace evident among evangelicals, viewing them as brothers and sisters in Christ who are, as the Second Vatican Council says, in a "certain but imperfect communion with the Catholic Church." In the Catholic understanding, the goal of ecumenism is the completion of that existing unity in full communion. As Joseph Ratzinger, now Pope Benedict XVI, has frequently said, none of us can foresee, never mind control, the ways in which the Holy Spirit might lead us to that fervently desired goal. I think we can be quite sure, however, that it will not happen by individual theologians constructing a church of their choice by liberally picking and choosing, according to their preferred understanding of biblical truth, what they recognize as belonging to the history of the Church of Jesus Christ through time. Collins' preferences and putative certainties notwithstanding, history is not so compliant as that.

As Timothy George understands, there is "a discernible pattern of Christian truth, a pattern derived from the apostolic witness and maintained across time as the *depositum fidei*, or what the New Testament calls 'the faith once delivered to the saints.' This pattern is embedded, like a genetic code, in the inspired text of Scripture itself." Of course, Catholics would want to say more than that with respect to how that pattern is discerned and how it informs what is authoritatively taught. But evangelicals who understand that there is such a pattern will, I expect, be less enthusiastic than is Kenneth Collins about his depiction of "the evangelical moment."

THINKING WITH THE CHURCH

The leadership of the Society of Jesus decided that Fr. Thomas Reese should be replaced as editor of *America* magazine. Fr. Reese, who was editor for seven years, said he agreed with the decision but, apparently, he later changed his mind. Institutions of all kinds make personnel decisions, and sometimes people are unhappy with such decisions. The present instance has occasioned a brouhaha in which it is claimed that Fr. Reese was removed on the orders of an allegedly oppressive Pope Benedict. Everybody should calm down, take a deep breath, and think again.

America is a Catholic magazine in the service of the Church and her mission. It is no secret that in recent years many people—probably including Pope Benedict when he was Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger—criticized the magazine for undercutting that mission, which is to present as effectively as possible the teaching of the Church. That mission requires intellectual integrity in honestly engaging arguments that question or oppose Catholic teaching. Catholicism does not pit faith against reason or faithfulness against intellectual inquiry. St. Ignatius Loyola, the sixteenth-century founder of the Jesuits, gave us the fine phrase *sentire cum ecclesia*—"to think with the Church." Thinking with the Church requires thinking.

The troubles at *America* are not about intellectual integrity or freedom. As a priest and editor, Fr. Reese exercised intellectual integrity and freedom in committing himself to the Church and the mission to which the magazine is dedicated. Unfortunately, under his editorship, *America* frequently seemed to be unwilling to take the side that, I believe, it is actually on. The problem was a basic mistake in editorial policy. It was thought that being "fair and balanced" required publishing on an equal footing articles that supported and articles that opposed the Church's teaching, as though the Church's teaching was but one opinion among others. The problem was compounded by the fact that such articles dealt with publicly controversial questions such as the moral understanding of homosexual-

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ity, same-sex marriage, and the exploitation of embryonic stem cells. On such questions, the Church has clearly defined positions. The practice of *America* suggested to some the magazine's neutrality, at best, or hostility, at worst, to the Church's teaching. Not surprisingly, they asked of the magazine, "Whose side are you on?"

Again, intellectual integrity requires honestly engaging opposing arguments. It does not require providing a platform for opposing arguments. I dare say that an editor working for Planned Parenthood, the Sierra Club, or the National Rifle Association who regularly turned an organization's publication into a platform for those opposed to the mission of the organization would soon be looking for another job. Of course, as Catholics understand it, the Church's mission is immeasurably more important, having to do with the salvation of souls and the morally right ordering of society. Moreover, it is hardly the case that readers need *America* in order to be aware of alternative and opposing viewpoints. Presumably, they are reasonably well-informed people with access to innumerable media that are critical of the Church's teaching.

A Catholic magazine—and it should be obvious that a Jesuit magazine is Catholic—may decide to publish an exchange or debate between conflicting positions, but there should be no doubt that the magazine is on the Church's side. A magazine of intellectual integrity and excitement is a magazine that knows where it stands. As for being fair and balanced, one should always be fair, but balance understood as neutrality is a formula for banality. Of course, there is a problem if an editor is in fundamental disagreement with the institution for which he works. One thinks, for instance, of someone at the NRA who undergoes a change of mind about the merits of banning guns. But we can confidently assume that was not Fr. Reese's problem. He not only works for the Church; he is solemnly vowed to surrender himself in her service, and, as a Jesuit, has taken a particular vow of loyalty to the Pope.

As editor, Fr. Reese, whom I count as a friend, seriously misunderstood the meaning of fair and balanced. The Society of Jesus decided it would be better for the magazine and for him if he moved into a different ministry. End of story. Unless, of course, one is interested in generating suspicion and hostility against the pope. Needless to say, no faithful Catholic would want to do that.

The above is my op-ed piece requested and published by the *Boston Globe*. Perhaps a few more things should be said. It all started with a story in the *New York Times*. "Vatican Is Said to Force Jesuit Off Magazine." That is the headline—on the front page yet. The "Is Said" is the key. In the jargon of journalists, the *Times* "didn't have the story." Fr. Thomas Reese, the editor in question, didn't say he was forced out. Nobody named in the story, including me, said that. The real story is that Laurie Goodstein and her editors were declaring, under the disguise of news, that Pope Benedict is clamping down on any hint of criticism. The last line of the article alludes ominously to a warning that Catholics may be forced back into an intellectual "ghetto." The ever-excitable Andrew Sullivan seizes upon the *Times* article to declare that Fr. Reese was "fired" as editor of *America* by that "petty, prissy tyrant" Benedict XVI. He depicts the alleged incident as "a call to arms for those of us who need to save the Church from this disastrous choice for the papacy."

I am afraid that the editorial reaction of *Commonweal* was hardly more temperate. The editors worry that "the Vatican's shocking dismissal" of Reese will "lend credence to the still-widespread impression that the Catholic Church is a backward-looking, essentially authoritarian, institution run by men who are afraid of open debate and intellectual inquiry." They note that Reese also published articles supportive of the Church's teaching and declare, "It is possible to ascribe the incredibly maladroit timing and handling of this decision to Vatican incompetence, arrogance, or obliviousness." The removal of Reese is "inexcusable," reflecting "insensitivity and recklessness," and is an instance of "the arbitrary and self-serving exercise of ecclesiastical authority." "For those who had hoped that the pastoral challenges of his new office might broaden Benedict's sympathies, this is a time of indignation, disappointment, and increased apprehension."

One is put in mind of G.K. Chesterton's little poem on the occasion of a certain F.E. Smith declaring in Parliament that the bill on Welsh Disestablishment was "a bill which has shocked the conscience of every Christian community in Europe."

Are they clinging to their crosses,
F.E. Smith,
Where the Breton boat-fleet tosses,
Are they, Smith?
Do they, fasting, trembling, bleeding,
Wait the news from this our city?
Groaning "That's the Second Reading!"
Hissing "There is still Committee!"
If the voice of Cecil falters,
If McKenna's point has pith,
Do they tremble for their altars?
Do they, Smith?

The poem concludes with: "Chuck it, Smith."

What purpose is served by the *Commonweal* editorial, which is titled "Scandal at *America*," other than to

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"lend credence to the still-widespread impression that the Catholic Church is a backward-looking, essentially authoritarian, institution run by men who are afraid of open debate and intellectual inquiry"? Is *Commonweal* not fomenting precisely what it says it fears?

The editorial concludes with this: "What [the Vatican] has done to Thomas Reese and *America* is the scandal. Is it possible that not one bishop has the courage to say so? That too is a scandal." The assumption is that bishops agree with *Commonweal* but lack the courage to say so. An alternative view is that bishops, along with others, think that *Commonweal*, along with the *Times*, simply got the story wrong. The undisputed fact is that the leadership of the Society of Jesus, in consultation with Fr. Reese (and, at least in his initial statement, in agreement with Fr. Reese) decided it was time for a change. The Society of Jesus is not mentioned even once by *Commonweal*. Why are the Jesuits not criticized for caving in to, as the editors would have it, illegitimate Vatican pressure? It would appear that *Commonweal* is out for bigger game. Pope Benedict, for instance.

Once again, intellectual inquiry is not only permitted in the Catholic Church; it is required. *Commonweal* says, "Evidently, the [Vatican] insists that any church-sponsored publication aimed at the educated faithful confine its activities to catechesis." Not at all, although solid catechesis has been in dreadfully short supply in recent decades. What is expected of a Catholic publication is that it be Catholic. Minimally, that means that it does not convey the impression that authoritatively defined teaching is but one opinion among others, that it does not leave the reader in doubt as to whose side it is on.

Commonweal is not church-sponsored but is generally thought to be Catholic (although a former editor insisted to me that it did not define itself as Catholic). FIRST THINGS is ecumenical and interreligious. Whatever our formal relationship with the Catholic Church, or lack thereof, we all have a responsibility not to "lend credence to the still-widespread impression that the Catholic Church is a backward-looking, essentially authoritarian, institution run by men who are afraid of open debate and intellectual inquiry."

A final note: A source close to *America* says that Jesuits have been told that there was a mid-March letter from Cardinal Ratzinger, then still prefect of CDF, ordering the removal of Fr. Reese as editor. Nobody we spoke to claims to have seen such a letter. "In the Jesuit tradition, these things are dealt with by word of mouth," explains our source. An expert on curial procedures says that only the Pope, then John Paul II, would have been authorized to issue such an order to the Father General of the Society. Whether CDF did or did not send such a letter is not pertinent to the above reflections. Final final note: Meeting at the end of May, the Catholic Press Association voted 48-28 against a statement expressing concern about Fr. Reese's resignation. Members argued that it would be irresponsible to protest when they did not know what had really happened. This could be the beginning of an outbreak of sanity.

UNFURLING THE FLAG OF FAITH

John Podesta was President Clinton's chief of staff during the impeachment procedures, so you know he is a man not averse to taking on tough jobs. Now he is head of the Center for American Progress, a Democratic think tank, which has launched a program called the Faith and Progressive Policy Initiative. With the help of people such as Jim Wallis of *Sojourners* magazine, the aim is to steal the "faith and values" card from those who are depicted as the extremists of the religious right, both evangelical and Catholic. (Podesta is very upfront about his being a Catholic.) A Zogby poll sponsored by his organization shows that 54 percent of the electorate belongs to "the silent majority" composed of religious moderates, progressives, and "non-traditional religious voters" who are cool to, or opposed to, the positions backed by conservative Christians who vote Republican.

The astute Andrew Ferguson is skeptical about Podesta's proposal to defeat Republicans by aping them. Ferguson writes: "Podesta's faith initiative shows the delusion at the heart of this mimicry. There's no doubting that religious conservatives have been one of the great engines of Republican electoral success. Yet this part of the conservative movement has been what a progressive might call 'organic,' a spontaneous coming-together of like-minded people in the face of intolerable offenses (so conservatives believed) from the larger secular culture. The religious right, in other words, is a bottom-up movement, bound together by a sense of grievance. Podesta's initiative, on the other hand, looks like an attempt to gin up an artificial movement that otherwise shows no independent signs of viability. Podesta is aware of the criticism and says he's not imposing a 'top-down' movement from Washington. 'It's religious leaders at the congregational level that are going to make this happen,' he says. 'We can enable them, we can assist them, we can be a catalyst.' This assumes, of course, that such a catalyst is necessary. The electorate contains many progressives with

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religious convictions, as Podesta's own poll demonstrates. It's also true, however, that they are politically engaged. And they're Democrats. Podesta hopes to rescue the Democratic Party by giving it something it already has."

That strikes me as about right. Grievance is not the most edifying factor in politics but it is critically important. There is nothing on the left that so widely and egregiously offends moral conviction as does *Roe v. Wade* on the right. Among evangelicals especially the grievance factor is regularly reinforced by the contempt with which they are viewed by those in control of the commanding heights of culture. True, the contempt is reciprocated, but who really cares about what those rubes think? Podesta's silent majority of moderates and progressives who are more or less religious and don't like the religious right are, as Ferguson says, already in the Democratic fold or are not part of the politically attentive public. Democracy is about majority rule, but electoral majorities are formed by politically potent minorities, and potent minorities are generated—not only, but very importantly—by grievances.

Apart from faculty lounges and leftist editorial rooms, nobody believes that Christian conservatives are out to overthrow the Constitution and establish a theocracy in this country. Mr. Podesta's problems are compounded by the fact that there is no way he can steal the abortion card, since the overwhelming majority of Americans believe the abortion license should be sharply limited. If, as seems to be the case, something like 75 percent of voters favor limiting legal abortion to the first three months and then only in narrowly prescribed circumstances, they are, for practical political purposes at present, to be counted as pro-life, whether or not they call themselves pro-life (although a majority of voters now do). Mr. Podesta's Faith and Progressive Policy Initiative looks like a forlorn effort, although he is not to be criticized for trying. In a country in which eight out of ten voters claim to be religious, any sane political operative will recognize the wisdom of unfurling the flag of faith.

WHILE WE'RE AT IT

■ Charles Krauthammer has about had it with the new war on certainty, as he calls it. Doubt is in, conviction is out. He notes the recent cover article in the *New Republic* lauding the "conservatism of doubt," as well as the big flop of a Hollywood movie that depicted the Christians and Muslims of the Crusades as champions of interfaith understanding. Of course the war on certainty is very specifically aimed at the most dangerous of certainties, those that are suspected of being rooted in religion. Such convictions, he writes, are criticized as "a deep violation of the tradition of American pluralism, ecumenism, modesty, and skeptical restraint." Krauthammer concludes: "That widespread portrayal is invention masquerading as history. You want certainty? You want religiosity? How about a people who overthrow the political order of the ages, go to war and occasion thousands of deaths in the name of self-evident truths and unalienable rights endowed by the Creator? That was 1776. The universality, the sacredness, and the divine origin of freedom are enshrined in our founding document. The Founders, believers all, signed it. Thomas Jefferson wrote it. And not even Jefferson, the most skeptical of the lot, had the slightest doubt about it."

■ I don't vouch for the authenticity of this. It was sent me by someone who calls himself "Diogenes." The editorial note by "JL" does lend a note of credibility to the claim that it is the first draft for a story in the *New York Times*. In any event, here it is:

Pick Seen as Sign of Contradiction
By Ian Fisher

CAESAREA PHILIPPI (20 Kislev). Yesterday's surprise announcement that doctrinal hardliner Jesus of Nazareth had been anointed "messiah" provoked mixed reactions in the diverse and sometimes fractious Israelite community, ranging from cautious disappointment to frank despair.

"I see it as a missed opportunity," said Herodias Schneidkopf, a Galilean incest-rights activist. "Many of us were hoping for someone more open to leadership roles for women and more appreciative of our experience. I don't feel valued."

Respected archpriest Caiaphas Bar Nun agreed. "Above all, the messiah should be a good listener. How can we as a faith community keep credibility among the youth of today if we cling to every jot and tittle of an outmoded social code while thousands die of leprosy and hunger? Today's highly educated Judahite community isn't satisfied with the old answers. I'm afraid it's a missed opportunity."

Even some members of the Messiah's personal entourage expressed misgivings. The Rev. J.E. "Dimples" Iscariot, S.J., a media consultant, did not hide his regret. "A missed opportunity, I'm afraid. We in the Society of Judas traditionally enjoy a special relationship to the messiah, but we'll find this choice very hard to explain to gays and lesbians—I mean, of course, to gomorrhaists and sodomitesses—as well as to the divorced and the marginalized. Why just the other day

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I saw 300 denarii, which might have been used to help find a cure for leprosy, squandered on wholly unnecessary ritual excesses."

Fighting the spread of leprosy is a vexed issue among contemporary Palestinians. Most polls show Israelites widely ignore official teachings on ethical matters, preferring to follow their own conscience. Some see Jesus' moral conservatism as a rigidity that leads to disfigurement and death in at-risk populations—and that may ultimately doom his movement to irrelevance.

"Yesterday's unction was an opportunity missed," insisted real-estate broker Sapphira Glass. "Today's young professionals don't find their own experience reflected in a one-size-fits-all morality that limits options and encodes patriarchal bias. I mean, sacrificing one's newborns to Moloch is a tragic but often necessary choice, and many of us find the language of apostasy alienating and judgmental." *[NYT copyeditor's note: Need some quote from supporter—J.L.]*

"It all comes down to power," countered maverick theologian Fr. Richard Maccabeus, retired professor of applied autology, who pointed out that the successful candidate had almost no pastoral experience. "What we're seeing is a right-wing restorationist fantasy in its death throes. Intelligent Israelites aren't buying. We want to be heard. We want someone who speaks not with authority but like us academics—I mean, of course, like the scribes and the pharisees. One can only call it a missed opportunity."

The Procurator of Judea was unavailable for comment.

■ The question is posed by *Publisher's Weekly* as to why Catholics and other "liturgy-oriented Christians" (meaning Episcopalians and Lutherans) buy fewer religious books than do evangelicals. Among the answers offered: Evangelicals are more focused on the Word and words; reading is an individual activity and evangelicals are more religiously individualistic; and evangelicals, being entrepreneurial, hock their wares, also from the pulpit, more aggressively. Nobody suggests that Catholics read less or buy fewer books, only that their reading and buying is less focused on books specifically Catholic. Catholics buy novels or works of biography, history, and adventure—without, says one expert, considering whether a book is "church-approved or orthodox"—while evangelicals stick within "a more narrow canon of approved Christian books." Who would have thought forty years ago that the *nihil obstat* and *imprimatur* largely dropped by Catholics would be picked up by evangelicals?

■ You could hardly avoid running into John Allen during the momentous events of April in Rome, I am glad to say. He was all over the place, giving interviews, schmoozing in restaurants, and offering intelligent sound bites—as intelligent as sound bites can be—on television. He did have a bit of an embarrassment in that he had for months been explaining why Joseph Ratzinger would not be elected pope. With heroic self-discipline, I declined to gloat about my long-standing prediction that he would be elected the second day of the conclave. Truth to tell, my prediction was based, in significant part, on wishful thinking. But wishful thinking, too, is sometimes vindicated. Allen had another and most particular problem. Five years ago he published a hurried "biography" of Ratzinger that was, as I noted at the time, deeply biased. This could seriously jeopardize, if not destroy, his journalistic access during the pontificate of Benedict XVI. Allen is busily working on damage control. In his online "Word from Rome" column, he quotes from a speech he gave in June 2004: "My 'conversion' to dialogue originated in a sort of 'bottoming out.' It came with the publication of my biography of Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, issued by Continuum in 2000 and subtitled 'The Vatican's Enforcer of the Faith.' The first major review appeared in *Commonweal*, authored by . . . Fr. Joseph Komonchak. It was not, let me be candid, a positive review. Fr. Komonchak pointed out a number of shortcomings and a few errors, but the line that truly stung came when he accused me of 'Manichean journalism.' He meant that I was locked in a dualistic mentality in which Ratzinger was consistently wrong and his critics consistently right. I was initially crushed, then furious. I re-read the book with Fr. Komonchak's criticism in mind, however, and reached the sobering conclusion that he was correct. The book—which I modestly believe is not without its merits—is nevertheless too often written in a 'good guys and bad guys' style that vilifies the cardinal. It took Fr. Komonchak pointing this out, publicly and bluntly, for me to ask myself, 'Is this the kind of journalist I want to be?' My answer was no, and I hope that in the years since I have come to appreciate more of those shades of gray that Fr. Komonchak rightly insists are always part of the story." After the election of Benedict, the publisher, seeing the opportunity for big bucks, ordered a large reprinting of Allen's anti-Ratzinger polemic, refusing him the opportunity to write a new and exculpatory preface. The publisher, Continuum, was even shameless enough to entitle the reissue *Pope Benedict XVI*, as though it were a new book. A deeply abashed John Allen promised a genuinely new book on Ratzinger-Benedict, also hurried but, he said, much more "mature and balanced," which appeared on June 7 as *The Rise of Benedict XVI*. Warning: Do not buy the book written in 2000. Is John Allen an opportunist try-

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ing to salvage his reputation and access as a Vatican reporter? I am convinced that is not the case. (See my favorable review of his subsequent book, *All the Pope's Men*, in December 2004.) Over these five years, Allen has, as they say, grown. I fully credit the change of mind—a change not unlike contrition—expressed in his speech. Some readers will not be able to overlook the fact that he is the Vatican reporter for the incorrigibly left-wing *National Catholic Reporter*, but at this point the paper needs him more than he needs the paper. John Allen is, quite simply, as good a Rome correspondent as we have in the English-speaking world, and I very much look forward to reading his new book on Joseph Ratzinger who, *mirabile dictu*, has become Benedict XVI.

■ People who are poor and black are a drag on society. We would all be better off if there were fewer of them. Since we have, with little success, spent trillions of dollars over the past several decades trying to make poor blacks non-poor, it is time we recognize that there are more efficient means of eliminating the drag. Stated so bluntly, many readers might find that way of putting the matter morally problematic. The extermination of anti-social elements does, after all, have a somewhat controversial history. One thinks, perhaps inevitably, of the Holocaust, but it did not start or stop there. Six years ago, economist Steven Levitt and law professor John Donohue sparked a brouhaha with their claim that abortion is probably the greatest crime-prevention measure ever invented. Now that argument has received renewed currency in the bestselling book *Freakonomics: A Rogue Economist Explains the Hidden Side of Everything* by Levitt and his co-author Stephen Dubner. In recent years there has been a 30- to 50-percent drop in crime, and many explanations are offered: new policing methods, more than two million people behind bars, the drop-off in the use of crack, and on and on. But a careful analysis of the data, say Levitt and company, indicates that the biggest factor, far and away, is that the millions of young men most likely to commit crimes were killed early on. A refreshing note of candor in the current discussion is that nobody is denying that all those fetuses killed in the womb were really human beings. So it seems the question of when human life begins has been settled once and for all. The dramatic decline in crime began eighteen years after *Roe v. Wade*, and a few years earlier in those states that liberalized their abortion law. Of course, most of the commentaries steer away from a too-explicit reference to race, although everybody is aware of the astonishingly inordinate incidence of crimes committed by young male blacks and the equally inordinate incidence of abortions procured by black women. In one interview, Levitt said his findings had little or nothing to do with race; his research on the correlation between crime and unstable family situations was based on Scandinavian research. Well yes, but nobody to my knowledge has suggested that the problem of crime in the United States is significantly related to the problem of Swedish immigration. Levitt, like Donohue, is also careful to say that he is not a supporter of the unlimited abortion license. I notice that many other commentators make a point of saying that this discussion is not about the rightness or wrongness of abortion. It just happens that killing black babies has the happy result of reducing crime. I do not question the research or logic of Levitt's argument. If a specifiable group is inordinately responsible for a social problem, it follows that eliminating a large number of people belonging to that group will reduce the problem. It is hard to argue with that. What is morally odious is the cool and disinterested way in which the commentariat is discussing what might fairly be described as racial cleansing. It's too bad about all those dead babies, but it is a kind of solution to the crime problem, if not a final solution. Meanwhile, those who style themselves black leaders, especially political leaders, are overwhelmingly in support of the unlimited abortion license, thus maintaining their distinction of being the only ethnic or racial leadership in history to actively collaborate in dramatically reducing the number of people they claim to lead. If they had been allowed to live, there would be about twenty million more blacks in America. White racists have reason to be grateful for what is sometimes still called the civil rights leadership. In another lifetime, before he succumbed to national ambitions, Jesse Jackson regularly declared that the war on poverty had been replaced by a war on the poor. There is more than a little to that. Having despaired of preparing young blacks to enter into the opportunities and responsibilities of American life, the society apparently decided to eliminate them before they had a chance to become a threat. The story of the Exodus plays a large and understandable part in black history: "Then the king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, 'When you serve as midwife to the Hebrew women, and see them upon the birthstool, if it is a son, you shall kill him.' But the midwives feared God and did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but let the male children live." Today's black leaders are more compliant, much to the satisfaction of those who think we would all be better off with fewer black people.

■ It deserved more attention than it received, but the launching of Jews Against Anti-Christian Defamation (JAACD) in April will, I believe, make a difference.

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The chief organizer and president is Don Feder, long time *Boston Herald* columnist and author of *A Jewish Conservative Looks at Pagan America*. "Pagan America," he contends, is what some want but not what America is or should be. The premise of JAACD is that America is a Christian society and everybody would be better off if people in general, and Jews in particular, stopped fighting the fact. On the board are influential Jewish thinkers including FIRST THINGS author Rabbi David Dalin, columnists Mona Charen, Barbara Ledeen, Michael Medved, and Jeff Jacoby of the *Boston Globe*, along with Herbert London of the Hudson Institute, comic Jackie Mason, Rabbi Daniel Lapin of Toward Tradition, the prolific scholar Rabbi Jacob Neusner, and activist David Horowitz. The minimal difference JAACD will make is that reporters will have a very different Jewish perspective to report in their search for "balance." More important, the new organization will reinforce the growing awareness that ours is—albeit confusedly so—a Christian society that cannot be understood or justly governed without reference to a normative moral tradition that is inescapably Judeo-Christian.

■ It seems doubtful *America* has learned much from the Fr. Reese fracas. A May 30 editorial comment notes that, when the magazine was established almost a century ago, Catholic intellectual life was stifled by a fear of what was called "Americanism," and many were unjustly reported to Rome as heretics or as theologically suspect. In 1914 Pope Benedict XV lifted the cloud with an encyclical, *Ad Beatissimi Apostolorum*, which said: "As regards matters in which without harm to faith or discipline—in the absence of any authoritative intervention by the Apostolic See—there is room for divergent opinions, it is clearly the right of everyone to express and defend his own opinion. But in such discussions no expressions should be used which might constitute serious breaches of charity." In the same issue, Fr. James J. DiGiacomo, writes in "Little Gray Cells" that his brain will not let him give assent to the Church's teaching on women's ordination, artificial birth control, and end-of-life care. These are all questions on which there has been "authoritative intervention by the Apostolic See" and on which dissent is clearly held to be harmful to faith and discipline. It is hard to read Fr. DiGiacomo's essay without concluding that he has declared himself to be his own Magisterium. But it is on the matter of "serious breaches of charity" that the author most egregiously displays his inability to understand what is required in responsible discourse. "And there is a disturbing development going on in the seminaries and among the priests themselves," he writes. "Many of the younger clergy find their identity in professing unquestioning assent to authority, and they explicitly differentiate themselves from those older priests who have failed to purge themselves of the disease of critical thinking." In my experience, the younger clergy want to differentiate themselves from thoughtless priests who have gravely undermined Catholic teaching and discipline, with the result that popular catechesis is in shambles and those "little gray cells" have too often rationalized behavior, including sexual abuse, that has brought great shame upon the priesthood. Fr. DiGiacomo is not finished with his calumnies against younger and more orthodox priests and seminaries. "There have always been careerists and climbers among the clergy who were willing to stifle individuality for the sake of advancement, but now there is a rising generation of priests who are moved not just by ambition but by a disturbing collectivism that narrows options for service and styles of leadership." And more: "At this moment in the life of the Church, those who refuse to close their eyes, turn off their minds, and settle for slack-jawed certainty are in for some bad times. They look more and more like blue staters in a red-state Church, as the true believers move into positions of power and influence and set out to silence the voices of reason." In the event it escaped a slack-jawed reader's notice, the author understands himself to be a voice of reason. Benedict XV again: *But in such discussions no expressions should be used which might constitute serious breaches of charity.*

■ "It appears that there are limits to the liberalization of biblical religion," Mark Lilla of the University of Chicago writes in a *New York Times* book review. We are then treated to a sniffingly aristocratic caricature of demotic religion and its violations of religion's proper place in a liberal order. "The leading thinkers of the British and American Enlightenments hoped that life in a modern democratic order would shift the focus of Christianity from a faith-based reality to a reality-based faith." That's a neat phrase, but substantively it is no more than a raw assertion of the magisterial authority of the author's preferred thinkers, and a claim that what the Christians he has in mind think to be real is not. It carries all the philosophical weight of a registration of Mark Lilla's opinion, or, perhaps more precisely, prejudices. He goes on to list the bad things such Christians are doing to our culture. "The fascination with the 'end times,' the belief in personal (and self-serving) miracles, the ignorance of basic science and history, the demonization of popular culture, the censoring of textbooks, the separatist instincts of the home-schooling movement—all these developments are far more worrying in the long term than the loss of

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a few Congressional seats." Nobody should deny that there are a lot of nutty Christians, just as there are a lot of nutty professors at the University of Chicago and elsewhere. It is true that Christians believe the world will end in the coming of the Kingdom, and scientists, many of them Christians, are fascinated by the end of the world. Isn't Mr. Lilla? I'm not sure what he means by ignorance of basic science and history. Most Americans—liberal, conservative, or whatever—are sadly ignorant on those scores. If he means the dispute over evolution, it is usually the Darwinian dogmatists who oppose free intellectual inquiry in the schools. I expect that Lilla knows that textbooks are censored more by the Left than by the Right, and the latter typically become "controversial" when they challenge the censorship of the former. As for miracles, they usually do benefit individuals and those they care about. Mr. Lilla wants miracles without benefits? More likely, I suppose, he doesn't believe miracles happen. Or maybe he believes only in miracles that don't benefit anybody. For what it's worth, his opinion is noted. What else? Oh yes, "the separatist instincts of the home-schooling movement." I doubt if Mr. Lilla knows much about that movement and how, as sociologist Christian Smith and others have shown, it provides a more diverse socialization than do public schools. The idea that the government should have a monopoly control over the education of children would have greatly surprised Mr. Lilla's leading thinkers of the Enlightenment. Mr. Lilla concludes: "No one can know how long this dumbing-down of American religion will persist. But so long as it does, citizens should probably be more vigilant about policing the public square, not less so.... [Y]ou cannot sustain liberal democracy without cultivating liberal habits of mind among religious believers. That remains true today, both in Baghdad and in Baton Rouge." That is a truly chilling passage. Of course, one is opposed to the dumbing-down of religion, as one opposes the dumbing down of our understanding of liberal democracy. As, for example, in the idea that citizens, meaning "we," should police the views of those with whom we disagree, meaning "them." Comparing the Christians whom he dislikes with militant Islamists is more worthy of a far-left blogsite such as *MoveOn.org*. It is worth taking note of Mr. Lilla's illiberal screed because he is a member of the university's Committee on Social Thought, which has in the past made many contributions to our national sanity. And because it is announced that he is planning for next year a book on theology and politics called *The Stillborn God*. One hopes there is still time for him to reexamine his prejudices, since we hardly need another book adding to our dumbed-down public discourse.

■ Addressing the things that really matter for a great Catholic university, Fr. Robert A. Wild, S.J., president of Marquette University says, "We must remember that Marquette University is first and foremost an academic institution. We have great momentum resulting from the accomplishments of our students, faculty and alumni over the past several years. Just last week we received the largest single donation in university history with a gift of $28 million that will transform our College of Communication. For the third consecutive year, we celebrate the fact that students are applying to Marquette in record numbers. Marquette has risen in national academic rankings. The campus has undergone a physical transformation, and Marquette has enjoyed the most successful fund-raising period in its history, raising more than $300 million during the current comprehensive campaign. These are the true measures of a great university." Marquette is a university "in the Jesuit tradition."

■ "So what are we to make of this apparent act of intercommunion?" asks Timothy P. Schelling in *Commonweal*. The question is prompted by the fact that then-Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger communed Roger Schutz, the now elderly and perhaps non-Catholic founder of the Taizé community in France, at the requiem Mass for John Paul II. "Clearly," Schelling continues, "it was no accident, yet it goes against church teaching. Just last year, the Vatican suspended a German priest, Gotthold Hasenhuttl, for presiding at an ecumenical Eucharistic service. Perhaps the new pope will shed some light on the subject." I hate to spoil the fun of making mischief but, as it happens, the last pope shed a very clear light on the subject in his last encyclical, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* (see "Getting Along at the Altar" in the October 2003 issue of FIRST THINGS). In doing so, he was reaffirming what has been the Church's teaching for ever so long. There are extraordinary pastoral circumstances in which it is permitted to commune non-Catholics. In addition, Roger Schutz and the Taizé community are very coy on the subject of whether he has been formally received into full communion. My hunch is that he has been. Most important, Schutz has been a close personal friend of two popes, and now of three, and I have no doubt they were in a good position to judge what are and are not extraordinary pastoral circumstances, if indeed this was extraordinary. There is no similarity whatever to the suspended priest who, in deliberate defiance of church teaching and a direct order from his superiors, handed out consecrated hosts as party favors to all comers. And so evaporates yet another of those difficult, complex, profoundly disturbing questions that, as *Commonweal* delights in complaining, the Church refuses to address.

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■ Lutheran pastor Richard O. Johnson writes in *Forum Letter*: "And then one might say also that the events surrounding John Paul's death offer a vision of the church that is strikingly different from the rather jejune one usually set before us. A colleague rose before dawn to watch the papal funeral. Near the end, as the Eastern Rite bishops were censing the coffin, he found himself weeping. 'I'm crying,' he explained to his son, 'because of what the church isn't.' On further reflection, he decided he was weeping because of what the church is, and because he is not, he believes, a part of it. 'It rattled me to my bones,' he wrote." Johnson speaks of the mystery, faith, and obedience so evident during those weeks in Rome. "Those things may seem to be in short supply in our particular side chapel of the holy catholic church. Perhaps seeing them on display so clearly will embolden us to seek them more earnestly in our parishes and our own hearts."

■ It's true that we have Frank Rich at the *New York Times*, but for sheer exuberance in unalloyed venom, we are way behind the Brits. Writing on John Paul's funeral, Polly Toynbee of the *Guardian* says the pope was responsible for the killing of millions of poor people by his opposition to contraception and abortion. "He was a good, caring man nevertheless, they say, as if it were a minor aberration. But genuflecting before this corpse is scarcely different to parading past Lenin: They both put extreme ideology before human life and happiness, at unimaginable human cost. How dare our prime minister go there in our name to give the Vatican our approval for this?" Ms. Toynbee continues: "Today's saccharine sanctimony will try to whiten the sepulcher of yet another pope whose obscurantist faith has caused pointless suffering; it is no defense that he was only obeying higher orders." If there are orders from on high, we are given to understand, all the worse for God. She noted at the funeral the presence of "mullahs, rabbis, and all the other medieval faiths that increasingly conspire together against modernity." "What is it about religion that unites them all on sex? It always expresses itself as disgust for women's bodies, leading to a need to suppress women altogether. Why is controlling women's bodies the shared battle flag of every faith?" But even the splenetically unhinged can stumble across a point worth considering. Ms. Toynbee writes, "The millions pouring into Rome (pray there is no Mecca-style disaster) herald no resurgence of Catholicism. The devout are there, but this is essentially a Diana moment, a Queen Mother's catafalque. People queue to join great public spectacles, hoping it's a tell-my-grandchildren event. Communing with public emotion is easy now that travel is cheap. These things are driven by rolling, unctuous television telling people a great event is unfolding, focusing on the few hysterics in tears and not the many who come to feel their pain." There is no reason to dispute the claim that for some the funeral may have been a "Princess Diana moment." That was not, however, the perception of those of us who were there or, I expect, the countless millions who watched on television. This was a vibrant moment of faith-filled grief and gratitude, especially the gratitude of the young. And, even if some did come for the spectacle, they were encountered by the gospel at the intersection of death and resurrection hope. Less important than what they came for is what they found. It is said that those weeks in April witnessed the most intense and sustained worldwide proclamation of the gospel in history. I am leery of superlatives but am not inclined to argue with that. If it is true, it can only magnify the anger of Ms. Toynbee and her like until one day, please God, they weary of raging against the light.

■ I commented elsewhere on the "tawdry" nature of Prince Charles' longstanding affair with, and subsequent marriage to, Camilla Parker Bowles, now styled the Duchess of Cornwall. I also had in mind the prospect of his becoming the next head of the Church of England. The comment elicited a number of responses, and I was especially struck by the observation of one well-informed Anglican that I was possibly making a number of unwarranted assumptions. First, he said, it is by no means certain that Charles will ascend to the throne. The possibility of skipping a generation in the succession is, I am assured, not just tabloid speculation. Second, the Anglican communion seems to be in the process of splitting and, if that happens, it is likely that the Church of England will split as well. If that happens, it would accelerate the move toward the formal disestablishment of the Church of England, a move favored by the Labour Party and by evangelicals in the church, as well as by the current archbishop of Canterbury who "favors it in the same passive way he favors same-sex unions," a major issue in the division now underway. So there may be much more afoot than my original comment suggested. I think I will stay with "tawdry," however.

■ Sorry for the interruption, that was another reporter wanting to know what Pope Benedict really thinks. They of a fervently investigative bent say it is hard to figure out what he believes and therefore what we might expect from him. On the day that this is being written, nine of the top sixty-nine books on the Amazon bestseller list are by Joseph Ratzinger (another is by John Paul II). They include everything from discussions of the Trinity, the reform of the liturgy, and the

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conflicting interpretations of Vatican II to his early and engaging *Introduction to Christianity*. To get a sense of the man and his perspective on both himself and the state of the Church, one might begin with *Salt of the Earth*. Excuse me, there is another reporter on the line. I suppose it would be impolite to suggest that reading what a person has written is a really great way to find out what he thinks.

■ Recommended reading is Peter Boyer's article "A Hard Faith" in the May 16 issue of the *New Yorker*. It is a thoughtful, well-researched, and finely written report on the "ascendance of orthodoxy" in American Catholicism. Perhaps most importantly, it describes the ways in which the pontificate of John Paul the Great took back the interpretation of the Second Vatican Council for the cause of authentic renewal in the continuity of tradition. Boyer provides bracing vignettes of young people, including monks and seminarians, who are discovering the high adventure of living the faith in its fullness. There is also a poignant depiction of such as Fathers Richard McBrien and Charles Curran, alternatively grumbling and raging in the ruins of their revolution that was not to be. Especially compelling is the account of Archbishop Charles Chaput of Denver, who is a leader among bishops championing a vibrant orthodoxy in accord with both the letter and spirit of the Council. There is an element of sweet justice in this article's appearing in the *New Yorker* where, forty years ago, Father Francis X. Murphy (writing under the pseudonym of "Xavier Rynne") launched the simplistic misreading of the Council as a victory of liberals (good guys) over bad guys (conservatives). "A Hard Faith" is very much worth reading. Send copies to friends and maybe to your bishop, particularly if he is still trapped in the "progressive" status quo. Boyer is not a Catholic but he understands as relatively few Catholics do the dynamics of what went wrong following the Council, and why the future promises to be very different.

■ Poor Robert Blair Kaiser lives in Rome and couldn't get any sleep. Kaiser, who wrote for *Newsweek* and other publications, was over many years among the most strident of progressive critics of John Paul the Great. The subject line of his email is, "Why the river of people flowing past my windows in Rome?" He writes, "They didn't queue up like this for the funeral of John XXIII (I was there), and he was more lovable than JPII. What's happening here????" Well he might ask.

■ In the 1950s, schoolchildren were instructed about what to do in the event of a nuclear attack. Much as NARAL Pro-Choice America is mass mailing a brochure, "Emergency Instructions for a Supreme Court Retirement." The idea is not to duck under your desk but to mount any podium to demand that any anti-Roe nominee be "borked," which is to say, politically nuked. NARAL and its allies have good reason to be alarmed. A new Harris Poll announces: "Only a Small Majority Still Supports *Roe v. Wade* and Opposition is at its highest in 20 Years." Good news for the good guys, you might think, and it is. In fact, it is much better news than Harris suggests. The key question asked by Harris says not once but three times that the Supreme Court decision of 1973 makes abortion legal "up to three months of pregnancy." That, of course, is a lie. Roe declared an unlimited abortion license, including, in the Court's interpretation, the right to kill a baby as it is almost entirely out of the birth canal (partial-birth abortion). In addition, Harris says it telephoned 1,012 adults, of whom 442 identified themselves as pro-life and 512 as pro-choice. Might not that skew the findings seven percent in the pro-choice direction? Most striking, however, is another question asked: "In general, do you think that abortion should be legal or illegal during the following stages of pregnancy?" The choices are "the first three months," the "second three months," and "the third three months." Seventy-two percent say abortion should be illegal in the second trimester and 86 percent say it should be illegal in the third trimester. Try squaring that with "Only a Small Majority Still Supports *Roe v. Wade*." There is also a new Zogby poll that asks if abortion should be legal after the unborn child's heart has begun to beat. Sixty-one percent say no. (Heartbeat can be detected twenty-two days after conception.) After fetal brainwaves can be detected? Sixty-five percent say no. (Brainwaves are detectable at forty days.) Not without reason is a terrified NARAL mass mailing brochures with "Emergency Instructions for a Supreme Court Retirement."

■ The very positive reviews of *The Cube and the Cathedral*, George Weigel's new book, are, I believe, richly deserved (Basic Books, 202 pp., $23). The book is a greatly expanded version of Weigel's essay, "Europe's Problem—and Ours" (FT February 2004). The "cube" in the title is La Grande Arche de la Défense in Paris, and the "cathedral" is Notre Dame, which, it is said, can fit into the Arche, much as Christianity has disappeared from the sight of most western Europeans. Europe is dying, and the root cause (for those fond of that phrase) is its abandonment of Christian faith. The rise of atheistic humanism in the nineteenth century and, along with it, a militant secularism, explain such things as the European Union's inability

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to even acknowledge its Christian heritage in its cumbersomely contrived, and now rejected, constitution. The demographic death of Europe is particularly striking, and we have paid frequent attention to that in these pages. America's declining birth rate is worrying, and would be much more worrying without Hispanic immigration, but Europe's decline is catastrophic, and is compounded by the surging Muslim population. A sociologist friend tells me, "Weigel is wrong to say you can't have a decent society without religion. European societies—Germany, France, Scandinavia—are decent in many ways. They may be flatulent and decadent, but they are not barbarous." My friend also discounts the religion factor in the demographic crisis. "The big factor here," he says, "is affluence, not the absence of religion. Children are very expensive, and they are viewed as an accessory rather than as an asset." Yes but, one may suggest that viewing children as an accessory rather than in terms of gift and duty is precisely a consequence of what Weigel calls "metaphysical boredom." Couples are consumers of time and opportunity, not participants in a history for which they bear responsibility. People think of themselves as the last generation, and live as they think. One is reminded of P.D. James' chilling novel *The Children of Men*, which begins with the line, "Early this morning, 1 January 2021, three minutes after midnight, the last human being to be born on earth was killed in a pub brawl." Living without hope has consequences. "In the long run, we're all dead," observed John Maynard Keynes in the world-weariness of his sterile sexual proclivities. Having children is an act of hope, which is faith disposed toward the future. Without an anticipated future, there are no children; without children there is no future to anticipate. Affluence is, I expect, less the reason for no children than it is the attempted substitute for children, which is to say the attempted substitute for hope. With respect for my sociological friend, I'm on Weigel's side on this one.

■ He agrees with all the conservative Christians who rallied to the defense of Terri Schiavo, but Ramesh Ponnuru is uneasy about some of the arguments made. Writing in *National Review*, he says, "During Terri Schiavo's last days, we heard, perhaps, too much about God, and not enough about justice. I say this not because I think that religious arguments about public policy are somehow inadmissible, or for that matter because I doubt that God wanted us not to kill Mrs. Schiavo. But this conviction of mine derives from my prior conviction that God wants us to do justice to one another. (Kant: 'Suicide is not abominable because God forbids it; God forbids it because it is abominable.') To say that God wanted us to save Mrs. Schiavo from starvation, without explaining why justice required us to save her, was conclusory." By "conclusory," he apparently means it allowed opponents to exploit false conclusions. Opponents contended that the nation is threatened by theocrats, and that those theocrats are either hypocrites or confused because, if they really believed in heaven, they would have wanted Mrs. Schiavo to get there as expeditiously as possible. But it is Ponnuru's concluding observation that is worth remembering: "People die every day, and people get killed every day. The Schiavo case was a tragedy not because the government failed to stop it from happening, but because it directed it to happen—with the apparent support of most Americans. The danger is not that the slope is slippery, but that we have already slid too far down it."

■ With the episcopal graciousness to which he has accustomed us, Bishop Robert Lynch of St. Petersburg, Florida, writes in his diocesan newspaper: "On the evening of his election as successor to Pope John Paul II, a certain television network was veritably 'crowing' about his election and how it will signal the end of lots of things in the Catholic Church which they did not like. That network and like-minded members of the church are probably in for the greatest disappointment in Benedict's papacy." Oh dear. I suppose he might mean George Weigel and Fr. Thomas Williams on NBC, but then "that network" does not generally have a point of view that the bishop so dislikes. So I suppose he must mean EWTN and the coverage by Raymond Arroyo and your scribe. I really don't think we crowed upon the election of Pope Benedict. The formal declaration from the loggia of St. Peter's was *Annuntio vobis gaudium magnum. Habemus papam*—"I announce to you a great joy. We have a pope." Accordingly, Raymond and I greatly rejoiced. I would like to think that Bishop Lynch was rejoicing as well. And I am rather confident that he will be disappointed in his somewhat unseemly hope that those who have long admired Cardinal Ratzinger, now Pope Benedict, will be disappointed with his leadership.

■ There are thousands of young girls—some reports say a million or more—trapped in the slave trade of prostitution. The Trafficking Victims Protection Act aims to do something about that, but Charles Colson says the "unmentionable topic" in military circles is that the United States is deeply complicit in the trade. A T-shirt in Thailand reads, "Good boys go to heaven. Bad boys to Pattaya." That's an American rest-and-recreation center infamous for prostitution, and specializing in young girls. Nicholas Kristoff of the *New York Times* has been writing about the sexual slave

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trade. During the Clinton years, a reason given for not cracking down on this sordid business was that the women were acting "voluntarily," and it was a means for marrying American men. Kristoff counters that "while many of the bar girls hope that they'll [marry], that's certainly not the typical result. A lot of them end up, if not with AIDS, then suffering from TB, drug addictions, and various STDs, with no savings, dying alone." Colson comments: "That some in our military contribute to this is heartbreaking—and shameful. We must go after the traffickers, but we can also target the demand for prostitutes. In this case, we can insist that the military change its culture. And that change is in the military's best interest. Prostitution is bad for morale: It destroys the moral authority of chaplains, officers, and senior enlisted men; and it makes deployments for married men all the more dangerous." It is true that, from time immemorial, armies have always been attended by camp followers. And it is true, as Thomas Aquinas and other worthies have taught, that the common good cannot bear the legal prohibition of every vice. But Colson is speaking of a military *culture* that encourages and exploits lethal vice. He quotes a former navy officer who says, "There is something incongruous about ambassadors from the world's greatest democracy capitalizing on the economic desperation of girls in the developing world." Resourceful readers may come up with a word stronger than incongruous.

■ A *Washington Post* story on the election of Benedict XVI said, "He then received the 'fisherman's ring,' which is also his seal of office and symbol of authority. It bore an image of Saint Peter, a fisherman and founder of the Roman Catholic Church." A little over a week later a correction appeared: "A *Washington Post* article about Pope Benedict XVI said that St. Peter was the founder of the Roman Catholic Church. According to the church, Jesus was the founder." I'm glad they got that one straightened out.

■ Christopher Hitchens, that fearless speaker of truth to power, was the first to do a hatchet job on Mother Teresa. *The Missionary Position: Mother Teresa in Theory and Practice* was given a big play in *Free Inquiry*, the magazine of the Council for Secular Humanism. The same publication is now excited about another book making the same point, *Mother Teresa: The Final Verdict*, by an Indian doctor, Aroup Chatterjee. Like Hitchens, he thinks he has got the goods on Mother Teresa and her Missionary Sisters of Charity, gleefully pointing out that they don't, as they should, run hospitals and schools. They are really interested in saving souls! And, if you can believe it, Mother Teresa "openly acknowledged" this vile truth. The author quotes her saying, "We are not nurses, we are not doctors, we are not teachers, we are not social workers. We are religious, we are religious, we are religious." There you have it from her own mouth. She is found guilty of religion, and of Catholicism at that. The reviewer urges that those concerned about the poor send their money to organizations involved in "more worthwhile activities." What would we do without brave mythbusters like Christopher Hitchens and the Council for Secular Humanism? I'm thinking about it.

■ Here it is at last: "Statement on the President's FY '06 budget by the Most Rev. Frank T. Griswold, Presiding Bishop and Primate of the Episcopal Church, USA." Bishop Griswold, despite the many arduous burdens of his office, presumably took time to work through the tens of thousands of pages of the federal budget and did so with three questions in mind: "Is the budget compassionate?" and "Does the budget strive to serve the human family, both at home and around the world?" and "Does the budget serve the common good?" Bishop Griswold's conclusion: "While there are some areas in President Bush's budget that give me hope, I am deeply disheartened by others." The Most Rev. Frank T. Griswold, Presiding Bishop and Primate of the Episcopal Church, USA, is deeply disheartened. Attention must be paid.

■ "God is Neither a Republican nor a Democrat." For some reason, that slogan, variously phrased and appearing on bumper stickers and graduation caps, is taken to be a protest against the Bush administration. James Nuechterlein, senior fellow at this institute, thinks it cuts in all directions. Reviewing Jim Wallis' best-selling *God's Politics: Why the Right Gets It Wrong and the Left Doesn't Get It*, he says of the author's policy proposals: "A moment's perusal of this litany of 'religious issues,' each of them framed in a similarly tendentious manner and accompanied by presumably appropriate biblical citations, would persuade any half-aware voter that God is most certainly not a Republican and that, while He might not be a registered Democrat, that is definitely the way He would be voting this time around. In treating the Bible as a textbook in political economy, Wallis is strikingly unaware of how he mirrors his opponents on the religious Right, whose propensities in this regard he equals if he does not exceed. In almost every case, he knows with blessed assurance what God requires. 'A budget based on a windfall of benefits for the wealthy and harsh cuts for poor families and children is,' he proclaims, 'an unbiblical budget.' With similar confidence he asks, in righteous indignation, when it was

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that Jesus became 'pro-war and pro-rich'? Nor is it only Jesus to whom Wallis makes biblical appeal for validation of his politics. We are informed, in extended detail, of what the prophet Amos would make of the Enron scandal, of the prophet Micah's 'vision' of national and global security, and Isaiah's 'platform' for properly biblical federal budgets. At one remarkable point, Wallis contrasts Micah's plan for world peace with that of Donald Rumsfeld; Rumsfeld does not come off well." Nuechterlein thinks the Democrats may be unwise in taking Mr. Wallis as their guide in the quest, or declared quest, to get religion: "His modestly revised social gospel may serve some of the party's purposes, but his habit of wrapping politics in religion is the very inclination that liberal Democrats so fervently denounce in others. And for a party already suspected of fecklessness on issues of foreign policy and national security, it would hardly seem prudent to select as its moral paladin a man who makes George McGovern look like a hard-liner."

■ I see that President Bush gave Calvin College in Grand Rapids some unwonted (and maybe unwanted) public attention. He accepted the college's invitation to give the commencement address, and a hundred faculty took advantage of the occasion to register their disagreement with him and his policies. They published a letter declaring, "We seek open and honest dialogue about the Christian faith and how it is best expressed in the political sphere. . . . [W]e understand that no single political position should be identified with God's will, and we are conscious that this applies to our own views as well as those of others." The smarminess of that statement is reflected in the form of the faculty protest. The letter includes four paragraphs, each beginning with the phrase "As Christians we are called" and continuing with "We believe," followed by specifications of how the policies of the Bush administration allegedly violate the course to which Christians are called. In each of the four paragraphs (offering the usual left-of-center litany of Democratic complaints against the administration), the signers are saying that Bush is failing to act as a Christian should. What a Christian should do, readers might be excused for thinking, is rightly "identified with God's will." The form of the protest amounts to this: "It is God's will that we not do evil. We believe your administration is doing evil." The signers say, for example, "We believe your administration has launched an unjust and unjustified war in Iraq." Since God calls us "to be peacemakers and to initiate war only as a last resort," it follows that they believe Bush has acted contrary to God's will. At the end of the letter, they ask the president "to reexamine your policies in light of our God-given duty," etc. They do not say anything about reexamining their own preferred policies. And then there is the simple bad manners of insulting an invited guest of the college. Said Dale Van Kley, who taught history at Calvin, "I can see that the Bush administration is gaining capital from this appearance, but I don't see what it does for Calvin." Presumably the president of the United States couldn't get a platform elsewhere and so was exploiting the national prominence of Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan. The thought occurred to me that the faculty protest was cooked up by the public-relations department of the college in order to get the school some attention, but then I realized that, "as Christians," they would never do anything like that.

Sources: Thinking with the Church, *Commonweal*, May 20; *New York Times*, May 6; Andrew Sullivan, May 7. Unfurling the Flag of Faith, *New York Sun*, May 4.

WHILE WE'RE AT IT: Krauthammer's certainty, *Time*, June 6. Evangelical book buying, *Publisher's Weekly*, May 30. Bush at Calvin College, AP news clippings, May 21. Mark Lilla and liberal religion, *New York Times*, May 15. Comments from Marquette news office, May 13. Intercommunion, *Commonweal*, May 6. Lutheran Richard O. Johnson, *Forum Letter*, May. Polly Toynbee unhinged, *Guardian*, April 8. Ramesh Ponnuru on Terri Schiavo, *National Review*, April 25. Bishop Lynch's optimism, *Florida Catholic*, May 9. NARAL and abortion polls, *Life Insight*, a publication of the U.S. bishops' conference. Colson on GIs and prostitution, *BreakPoint*, February 18. *Washington Post* learns of Jesus, *Washington Post*, May 4 correction. Against Mother Teresa, *Free Inquiry*, October/November 2004. James Nuechterlein reviews Jim Wallis, *Commentary*, June.

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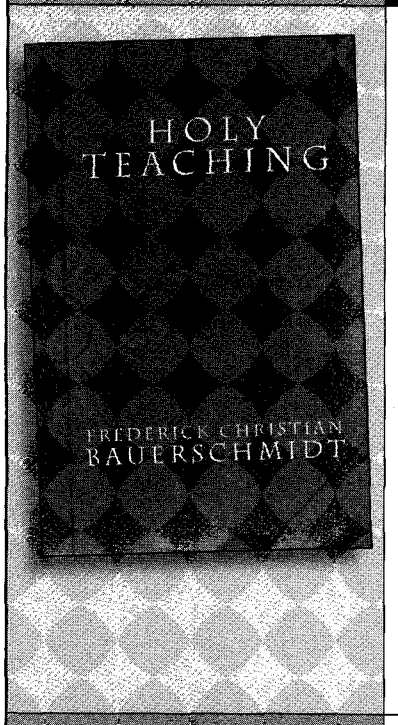

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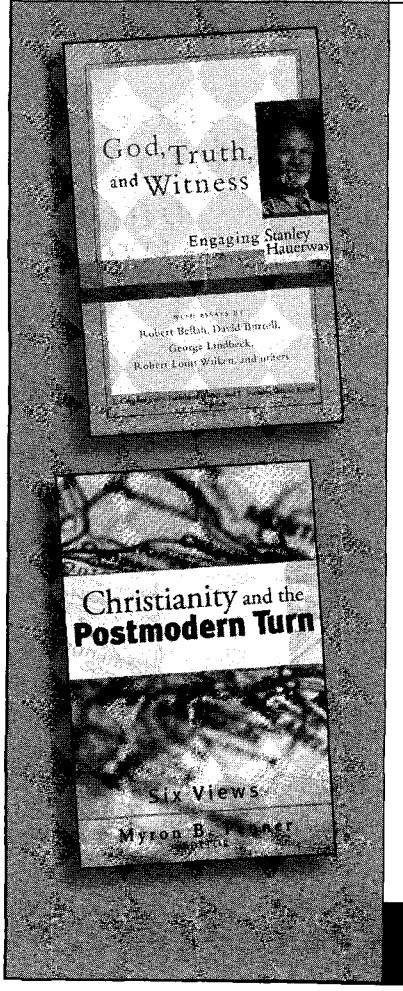

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Do Christians belong in the ivory tower and the corridors of power?

We believe they do.

THE HARVEY FELLOWS

THE HARVEY FELLOWS PROGRAM seeks applications from Christians engaging in graduate study at premier universities. The Harvey Fellowship is designed to recognize, encourage, and support Christians who aspire to leadership in strategic realms of society.

If you are a committed Christian pursuing a graduate degree at a top institution and you will be entering a field that is underrepresented by Christians, such as law, business, government, fine arts, or academia, we want to hear from you. In the biblical tradition of figures such as Daniel, Esther, Joseph, and Lydia, we hope to encourage faithful Christians to pursue positions of influence. Believing in the Lordship of Christ over all of creation, the Harvey Fellowship is motivated by the cultural mandate to redeem the structures that shape society, as well as the people in it.

Harvey Fellows receive a stipend of $15,000, which is awarded on the basis of merit and is renewable for up to a total of three years. Generally, only students studying at a program considered to be among the "top five" in its particular field will be considered.

Applications will be accepted from August 1 to November 1, 2005. The Harvey Fellowship is an initiative of the Mustard Seed Foundation. For more information or to receive an application, please see our website or contact us:

THE HARVEY FELLOWS
3330 Washington Blvd., Suite 100 ~ Arlington, Virginia 22201
(703) 524-5620 ~ *www.harveyfellows.org*

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